

**Modality and politeness in Late Modern English:  
evidence from eighteenth and nineteenth century grammar and usage books**

**Hiroshi Obara**

**PhD**

**The University of Edinburgh**

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My signature certifies that this thesis represents my own original work, the resultant of my own original research, and that I have clearly cited all sources.

Hiroshi Obara



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## Abstract

This thesis is concerned with providing an analysis of data on modal verb forms in grammar and usage manuals in the Late Modern English period. In my study I consider (a) the influence of the historical sociolinguistic context and (b) how such context may be incorporated in a network model of structure and use. This study aims to discuss further the relationship between language and politeness in the later history of English and highlight some ways in which grammars and usage books are relevant in furthering our understanding of Late Modern English grammar.

Chapter 1 focuses on the state of eighteenth and nineteenth century English society, in order to understand its influence on aspects of linguistic activities and the grammatical tradition of the time. We can see that there was particular attention paid towards the proper use of language and the concept of politeness, resulting in the publication of many grammar, usage and manner books. Chapter 2 looks at the concepts of mood and modality referring mainly to the grammar books of the Late Modern English period. It is possible to recognise that the concept of modality is derived and developed from the one of mood. I examine the classification and description of the modal auxiliary verbs, and how the form is related to both mood and modality; I also explore the range of accompanying senses across a semantic – pragmatic continuum, and how the grammarians increasingly describe aspects of ‘polite’ uses of the modals. Chapter 3 treats politeness in depth. Two aspects are proposed as the driving forces in the conceptualisation of politeness in Late Modern English: one is universal and the other is variable. The latter is the object to which this thesis pays most attention. The importance and influence of this aspect can be confirmed with some data from grammar and usage books. Chapter 4 discusses the relationship between the modal auxiliary verb and politeness. The historical view, based on data from the Late Modern English period, suggests that the sense of politeness has emerged through the grammaticalization process affecting the modal auxiliary verb in English. Chapter 5 is concerned with modelling the mechanism by which the modal auxiliary verb represents a variety of senses of politeness in the later history of English. The mechanism is reflected as a network-based model and as an advance on the models previously proposed.

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## Abbreviations

<b>EModE:</b>	<b>Early Modern English</b>
<b>LModE:</b>	<b>Late Modern English</b>
<b>PDE:</b>	<b>Present-Day English</b>
<b>TAM:</b>	<b>Tense, Aspect, Modality</b>



## Introduction

‘How can I express my polite attitude or intention in English?’

Surprisingly, this question was the starting point from which I launched the present study into the emergence of modal verbs as politeness markers in Late Modern English. As a native Japanese speaker, I am used to adopting certain terms of respect to express politeness. Normally, the terms of respect are marked almost everywhere in most of the expressions in Japanese. For the Japanese speaker, it is natural to reflect his / her politeness using special terms. On the other hand, in English, at first glance, it seems that there is no particular specifically established term equivalent to the Japanese honorific that functions as a politeness expression. Nevertheless, it is also true that we can recognise that there is much information available which tells us that there exist terms of respect in English, especially in publications which are written by Japanese linguists (e.g. Azuma 1994). There are also even their own Japanese guides to good manners to tell how to use the terms of respect (e.g. Nagasaki 2004, Hongo 2006, Chitekiseikatukenyuho 2003), which are popularly issued mainly for businessmen. The situation is, therefore, very confusing. I was very much interested in the situation regarding the state of the relationship between politeness and the English language.

Even more surprisingly, perhaps, the word *would*, in particular, almost always crosses my mind in this regard. This is because I can still remember that I was impressed that the specific word was introduced as if it was a term of respect when I was a student in Japan. Indeed, for example, a school textbook for English education for the second year of the junior high school in Japan says that “*would* you...?” is the expression to mark politeness (Horiguchi (ed.). 2001: 60). In other words, even though the textbook does not state directly that the word is a term of respect like the Japanese honorifics, at least the description indicates that the word is a key or a marker to express politeness. *Shall* and *will* are also similarly described as

a means to express politeness (Horiguchi (ed.). 2001: 41). This led to an increased interest in the English modals.

Since this research originated from the perspective of someone trying to acquire Standard English originally through the written language, I also became interested in furthering my knowledge of the textbook and, in particular, the grammar book. Since the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries are the periods when the publication of the grammar book in English had become active, I want to know how the modal auxiliary verb at that time was defined, and its use explained. How was politeness recognised and expressed? The aim of this research is to look at the relationship linguistically, historically and socially and propose certain advanced ideas to understand the association more effectively.

In this introductory part of my thesis I will present some brief summaries of each chapter. Chapter 1 deals with late Modern English sociolinguistics and with the methodology adopted in this thesis. In section 1.1, a brief outline of relevant sociolinguistic concepts is introduced. Key words which are included here are, for example, 'mobility', 'status', and 'class'. Section 1.1.2 describes a social situation in which many innovations had occurred. The changes include both aspects of social infrastructure and people's attitude towards that infrastructure. Urbanisation caused greater disparity between urban and rural areas, yet while the mobility between social classes was increasing, a certain recognition of the differences between each class became established. The emergence and availability of newspapers and other publications, the postal service, libraries, the telephone and the telegraph were influential in the emergence of Standard English. The mode of living had improved as industrialisation went on. The direction of these social changes required a more commercialised mode of living and the outcome was the appearance of sharp class divides.

One of the examples of such a dichotomised distinction can be seen in section 1.1.3. The section treats the issue of the rise of the notion of 'femininity' which was said to be related to politeness. Since the sensibility, action and behaviour of women were valued, their language was also regarded as preferable. Section 1.1.4 describes that situation in which a highly educated state was also valued. The rise of this view

corresponded to the development of the educational system. There were several opportunities whereby people could receive education. Most schools operated privately, but there were some, such as Sunday schools, which were accessible to people from lower social classes; yet the education itself which was available to most seems to have not been so sophisticated, especially compared to the public school which was only accessible to wealthy people. However, the situation was changed by the advent and establishment of public institutes and the related organised systems under the idea of equal opportunity. The idea of 'equality' was also influential in the emerging idea of 'standard' or 'standardised' language.

Section 1.2 introduces some attitudes which were attached to language at the time. Concepts such as 'correct' and 'standard' were related to 'polite(ness)'. Since to acquire 'proper' use of the grammar in English was valued, the role of the text books was to provide models of correct usage. This was particularly the case in the description of the grammar book. What is right was clearly prescribed. As far as the popularity of the prescribed texts is concerned, it is estimated that the demand for the description and information was quite high. This may have matched the need of the learners, who wanted clear, simple answers regarding which set of linguistic forms is right. On the other hand, some authors of the grammar book suggest that their actual intention was not to prescribe. These issues are explored in this section.

Section 1.3 explains the relation between society, politeness and language. It is possible to find several senses and concepts which are connected to politeness in the grammar book. Also, it seems possible to estimate that there exist certain distinct views towards politeness which vary across historical periods. This is because the senses and concepts which can be found from the description in the Late Modern English period as polite-related represent the trends of the time. Combined with the other more universally recognisable idea of politeness as 'consideration for others', this aspect of social influence seems to be one of the important factors by which to gauge polite language in Late Modern English.

Finally in this chapter, the method which I adopted to write this thesis is explained. The corpus I analysed includes 48 randomly collected grammar books which were published in the Late Modern English period. While such grammar

books were mainly used for detailing the information about the relation between forms such as the modal auxiliary verbs and their accompanied senses, several manner books were also looked at to investigate the relations between politeness and language, and between politeness and society. In addition, usage books were examined, mainly to explore prescriptivism further.

Chapter 2 focuses on the treatment of the modal verb in the Late Modern English grammar book. One of the issues which is closely connected to the expression of politeness is the concept of modality. In section 2.1, the position of the grammar book as a text book is discussed. The learner – targeted, model – based, prescriptive pattern is introduced. The reason for the adoption of this pattern seems to be very simple: the style is just a copy from the grammar (book) of classical languages such as Latin. Yet, I show how this raises problems for a description of English grammar: particularly, the conceptualisation of mood system does not actually match the situation in Late Modern English. Section 2.2 focuses on verbal morphology, particularly in the expression of mood and tense. There are several categorisations in terms of the classification of mood depending on who the author of the text is. When the situation is looked at more closely, it is possible to discover that the most contentious issue is the one in which the authors attempt to explain the concept of modality. Section 2.3 is concerned with mood and modality. Mood, which was originally established as the formal category system, seems to be recognised as part of a linguistic system which represents our mental attitude towards the propositional part of the utterance. Mood seems to be established as a formal system in which the simplest expression, namely the indicative is placed as a kind of default or core. On the other hand, modality seems to be a concept which coherently focuses on aspects of sense or meaning. Here again, the primary view is to distinguish an expression between the propositional and modalizing parts; but modality may be expressed linguistically by things other than (inflectional) mood. Nevertheless, the modal auxiliary verb holds an important position as a formal means of expressing modality. The senses of modality extend across semantic and pragmatic concepts. The same thing can be said to apply to the properties of the

modal auxiliary verb. While this view was established during the twentieth century, the basic idea was actually pointed out at the end of Late Modern English period.

Section 2.4 explores the treatment of the grammar of the auxiliary verb generally, and the modal verb in particular. Even though there are a variety of ways to express modality, it is obvious that the value of the role and position of the auxiliary verb is overwhelming, as far as the descriptions of the grammar book are concerned. Because of the recognition of the modal sense, many authors distinguish certain auxiliary verbs as a particular kind of subcategory. I explore the motivations for such a categorisation in this section. Finally, section 2.5 observes the various senses which are attached to the modal auxiliary verb more closely. Nowadays the study of meaning can be divided into (at least) two parts: semantics and pragmatics. The meanings which are associated with the modal auxiliary verb extend across both of these domains, and evidence from late Modern English grammars regarding modal meaning is discussed in this section.

Chapter 3 focuses on the issue of politeness. Politeness as a subject of study, especially as a subject of linguistic study, has recently increased in popularity. Researchers' attention to this subject seems to have rapidly increased since around 1970. While the main publications in this field may be about universal aspects of politeness, my view in this research is rather historical and cultural. Although this involves the universal aspect sometimes or even often, this is because it is hard to separate completely the general from the specific. I argue that politeness consists of both universal and socially variable aspects, which interconnect. Section 3.1 first introduces the situation regarding how politeness in the Late Modern English period was conceptualised. Then the difference between universal and variable politeness is discussed. While it is true that people universally and naturally may be linguistically polite, it seems also true that there exist certain kinds of politeness that are culturally specific. Section 3.2 discusses the validity of my account of culturally specific politeness in contrast to the popular theory of face and politeness proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). Although it is easy to notice the universal aspect of politeness from their theory (and actually most critics respect the points raised there), the variable aspect which is indicated in the formula to calculate the 'weightiness' of



politeness (Face Threatening Acts) has not become a topic of discussion in other research very much. Since I think that the variable aspect should be recognised more widely, I try to provide some criteria for a more variable strategy to judge politeness, based on data which show a comparison of the conceptualisations of politeness among American and Japanese informants. The result of the experiment suggests that their views towards politeness are different because of different social influences. This cross-linguistic study is then related to diachronic variation, specifically to those issues described in the explanation of the meaning associated with the modal auxiliary verb in Late Modern English, as outlined in chapter 2. We can see certain interactive connections between universal and variable aspects, internal and external factors, and also synchronic and diachronic phases with regard to the conceptualisation of politeness.

Chapter 4 looks specifically at the relation between politeness and the modal auxiliary verb in Late Modern English. After the introductory part (section 4.1), section 4.2 revisits the issue of how the senses of the modal auxiliary verb are recognised and defined in the grammar book of the Late Modern English period. While normally the modal auxiliary verb is treated with the other auxiliary verbs such as *be*, *do* and *have*, there are some writers who seem to suggest that the modal auxiliary verb is slightly different from the others. For example, the descriptions of the interpretation of the modal auxiliary verb often tell that the term implies senses which are abstract, like ‘possibility’ and ‘necessity’. This kind of abstract feature as a property of the modal verbs also makes the relation between the word and the meaning (or function) vague. On the one hand, there are senses which seem to be clearly semantic, like ‘ability for *can*’ and ‘obligation for *should*’. On the other, there are senses which are difficult to connect to a specific lexical item, such as ‘hypotheticality’, which may be more contextually or pragmatically determined. Section 4.3 discusses aspects of the modal auxiliary verb as a marker of politeness. Several of the senses of the modal auxiliary verb can be associated with concepts linked to politeness. It is possible to find evidence for this in the descriptions of the grammar and usage books in the Late Modern English period. In the grammar book, there are some senses such as ‘modest’, ‘soften’ and ‘elegant’ which are very clearly

representatives of polite usage. It seems that in most cases these polite senses co-exist with other senses which are less close to the concept of politeness such as 'power' and 'duty' (which are more associated with root modality). As far as these descriptions are concerned, it is estimated that the appearance of the polite sense is the result of mutual interaction with the other available senses, depending on how the language user judges the polite – impolite distinction. Therefore, the politeness which can be recognised with the modal auxiliary verb – based expression owes much to the effect of the mutual connections between the modal senses. In the usage and the manner books it is rare to see a description which shows a direct indication of the connection between the modal auxiliary verb and the concepts of politeness; nevertheless, it is common to see the description of the relation between politeness and language in general. In the manner book in particular, there are many senses which reflect the concepts or views of politeness during that period. This observation makes us recognise that it is rare to see a description which clearly tells of the direct connection between 'politeness' and particular linguistic forms in English. Such polite uses are connected not only to linguistic expressions in a more general way (not particular single words, but utterances in context), but also attitude and behaviour more broadly. Section 4.4 considers the nature of the conceptualisation of the senses of the modal auxiliary verb regarding politeness. As the previous section indicates, the senses which are regarded as the properties of the modal auxiliary verb are connected in a dynamic and evolving network. I explore the relationship between this network and the linguistic notion of subjectivity. The subjectified senses extend from semantic and pragmatic meanings, as a result of the well-known grammaticalization process which the English modal auxiliary verbs have undergone. Like the dynamic and flexible sense network, the evolutionary process of grammaticalization can be coherently related to politeness, as I show in this section.

Chapter 5 takes up the particular characteristic of the network connection between the senses of the modal auxiliary verb. This chapter focuses on the aspect of this network which is associated with politeness. After the introductory section 5.1, in section 5.2, I explore the various connections between semantic and pragmatic

meaning, inflectional mood and semantic modality, and objective and subjective perspectives, which are involved in the modal auxiliary verb network. The relations between the senses lead to other connections between the modal auxiliary verbs, between politeness and the verbal forms, and also between politeness and the semantic senses. Accordingly, it seems to be possible to compare the structure of the dimension of the senses associated with the modal auxiliary verb to a web-like network which is composed of a variety of links. In section 5.3, before proposing my network model, other models or theories which have been put forward regarding the meaning of the modal auxiliary verb are looked at for purposes of comparison. In section 5.4, several examples from the descriptions in the grammar book in the Late Modern English period are taken up, and I explore how the existing models cope with such data, then describe what is lacking in the existing accounts, and what points are to be revised. Through this kind of comparative observation, it is possible to reconfirm the dynamic and flexible network which has evolved in the history of the modals. Moreover, it is also possible to notice that the network involves a certain stratified structure or connection between senses. In section 5.5, a new model which describes the meaning-making or conceptualisation of the modal auxiliary verb is offered. As the previous section 5.4 indicates, there are a variety of componential senses involved in this ‘semantic – pragmatic’ space. I show how aspects of modal ‘meaning in use’ may be divided into three sub-categories, namely ‘semantic’, ‘textual-pragmatic’ and ‘social-interactional’. My thesis ends with further discussion of the nature of this network model to reflect the conceptualisation of the meaning of the modal auxiliary verb. As can be seen in my network analysis, the elements of the suggested model (senses, links, dynamicity, etc.) are basically features which can be adopted from the information available from the Late Modern English data.



## **Chapter 1. Aspects of Late Modern English Sociolinguistics**

This chapter explores some of the issues relevant to Late Modern English sociolinguistics. Section 1.1 describes the distinct social context of the Late Modern period. During the process of urbanization, the social infrastructure had rapidly changed and several newly available services and lifestyles had also emerged. Easier access to written media can be considered as one of the outcomes. Such an environment institutionalised some aspects of the social dimension of language, and this is explored in section 1.2. Besides concepts such as ‘polite’ or ‘superior’ varieties of English, other concepts such as ‘correct’ and ‘standard’ had also appeared. While it is estimated that several kinds of text books were issued capturing the public desire for education, the popularity of the grammar book was pre-eminent. Section 1.3 is more about politeness. How Late Modern society valued politeness and how politeness was reflected in language are discussed. The observation implies that the conceptualization of politeness may be distinct depending on times and societies. For example, ‘standardisation’ can be regarded as one of the influential factors which directed the conceptualization of politeness at that time. The notion of ‘standard’ is related to the issues in the guidebook to polite attitude and behaviour, which also tells us something of politeness during the Late Modern English period. Section 1.4 explains the method adopted in this study. In this section, I explain the reasons why the Late Modern English period was chosen as the particular time period for the research and why the grammar, the usage and the manner books were taken up as primary references. In addition to the information on the contents of the three types of text book, the organization of the main corpus of the grammar books I used is also indicated.

## **1.1 English and eighteenth and nineteenth century society**

### **1.1.1 Introduction: the social context**

Until recently, the 'Late Modern English' (LModE) period was an unfamiliar concept in the study of the history of English. Görlach (1999: 5) notes the minor status of the period (in terms of the amount of research devoted to it) compared to Early Modern English (EModE) and Present-Day English (PDE). It seems that there is no universal definition of the period of the years which constitute LModE: for instance, Beal (2004: 2, 9-11) also discusses the lack of agreement on the definition of the period. She regards the LModE period as the time frame from around 1700 to the end of the Second World War, while introducing other possible timeframes proposed by others (e.g. Schlauch 1959: 122-5, Blake 1996: 4-5, Bailey 2003: 22, in Beal 2004: 2), some of which take the Restoration into consideration as the starting point. In my research I will regard the LModE period as around 1700 – 1900, admitting that, while the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are the main focus, slight extensions before 1700 and after 1900 will be seen in some parts. The reason for this decision is because many of the grammar books – which are the prime resources for this thesis – share similar concerns and a similar format within this period.

The late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are said to be a period of “no little change in the context of the social order and social labels prominent within it” (Mugglestone 1995: 71). A significant social change in the period was the ‘Industrial Revolution’ in Britain. Briggs (1959: 65) describes the social division in the 1780s as that between “the newly rich” and “the new workers”, and he further points out that the rapid advance of the new social division made the idea of ‘class’ appear as “a new concept in English social thinking”. What this suggests is that the industrial revolution, i.e. changes in technologies, facilities, social structures, etc., brought about a new way of thinking, or a new perspective. Mugglestone (1995: 72) also supports this idea. This thesis is not greatly concerned with the political and

economic effects of the Industrial Revolution, but concentrates more on the social effects, particularly the disruption to, or revolution in, concepts of social status. This revolution within people's consciousness would produce multiple effects, which can be grouped into two large categories: an increase in social mobility, and changes in the delineation of social status.

In terms of these, although there was a change from the medieval feudal social order which had a strict, immobile status system, it is estimated that the aristocratic system and its related discrimination of status still had influence. Perkin (1969: 17) tells us that immediately before the Industrial Revolution, English society was based on property and patronage. This is in turn different from the feudalism in the medieval period in that then the power was concentrated more on the governing families. Borsay (1990: 268), referring to Rogers (1979), indicates the existence of the land based social order during the Hanoverian period, too. Furthermore, Mandler (1990) analyses the existence of a landed elite in the first half of the nineteenth century. This social order is also different from the class – based society which was to emerge after the revolution. The aristocratic society, which could, in a sense, be seen as transitional between medieval feudalism and modern democracy is described as follows:

- (1) a hierarchical society in which men took their places in an accepted order of precedence, a pyramid stretching down from a tiny minority of the rich and powerful through ever larger and wider layers of lesser wealth and power to the great mass of the poor and powerless.

(Perkin 1969: 17)

In such a society it was still not so easy for people to deviate from their family lines and join others of differing occupation and status: Roger (1979, cited in Borsay 1990) points out the existence of the influence of lineage at that time. However, as the modern capitalist method of wealth creation thrived on a system of mass employment (as a whole in the society in which it was established and

developed), a meritocracy began to replace the aristocracy, which had become less conspicuous. This can be witnessed in the following quotation:

- (2) as the population doubled, and then trebled, as a largely agrarian social order became instead one marked by the urban and commercial, as railways extended the potential for geographical mobility at a hitherto unexpected rate, and as a new set of white-collar and professional occupations come into being, a new system of advantages, and conversely, of inequalities, did in a number of ways come to displace those which had previously pertained

(Mugglestone 1995: 72)

If there is one thing which symbolizes the trend or the change during this period, it is the change in the delineation of social status. The range of interpretation of the phrase 'social status' is broad, but this is necessary so that it can reflect the situation of the period effectively. The emerging modern capitalism was to yield new socially categorized groups. One of the bases which produce this social categorisation is the notion of (social) 'class'. The word(s) '(social) class' did not seem to be generalized until at around the turn of the nineteenth century (OED (online: <http://dictionary.oed.com/>)). Social class was first used to classify groups depending on what kinds of work people were engaged in (Perkin 1969: 26). It seems that the concept of 'class' in the earlier time was a rather innocent idea. Koditschek (1990: 1) also points out that British historians:

- (3) acknowledge class as one of several diverse social forces and identities but deny any necessary connection between particular class positions and forms of consciousness and refuse to grant "class" any conceptual privilege.

(Koditschek 1990: 1)

There also existed certain senses of either wealth or poverty associated with class:

- (4) Society, however, was something more than a vast cluster of families, some born to property, others to poverty. It had its *ranks* and *orders* and its necessary degrees of subordination and authority.

(Briggs 1959: 9)

McCord (1991: 104) notes the simpler occupational patterns in a pre-industrial period are easier to categorise as working class because of relatively uniform agricultural work. A similar perspective is also pointed out by Briggs (1979: 287). The same difficulty also applies to the condition of the middle class. For example, McCord (1991: 227-228) suggests the social boundaries of the middle class in the period 1830-1850 are hard to distinguish. While McCord admits that housing condition is one of the standards which distinguish the social class, he also reveals that the actual application of this criterion to the middle class was inconclusive. This suggests that the existence of diversified occupations and statuses after the revolution make it more difficult to identify and conceptualize class(es). Perkin (1969) regards the birth of a new class-based society as a result of the Industrial Revolution:

- (5) A class society is characterized by class feeling, that is, by the existence of vertical antagonism between a small number of horizontal groups, each based on a common source of income.

(Perkin 1969: 176)

Thompson (1963: 9) considers the concept of 'class' as "an *historical* phenomenon", that is, rather dynamic, not a mechanical and static 'structure' or 'category'.

- (6) Class happens when some men, as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared), feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs

(Thompson 1963: 9)

Thompson also describes the nature of class as “an active process ...in human relationships” (1963: 9). This suggests that ‘class’ depends much on socialization between people. McCord (1991: 99) also points out the existence of a certain solidarity among people as a factor to identify class.

It is estimated that the dynamic socialization process involves various factors which seem to make it difficult to clearly distinguish economic from non-economic issues. For example, it is said that social and occupational behaviour lead to cultural reactions, and they relate to commercial and urbanized activities (Morgan 1994: 2). Various factors, including social structure, culture, industry, etc. are connected to each other. Since the very basis of the idea of ‘class’ was solidarity of fellow feeling, the situation which describes each class can be as varied as the numerous solidarities which exist between different groups. It is said that “the bourgeois moral virtues of industry, discipline, thrift and sobriety certainly were important for the production side of industrial activity” (Morgan 1994: 119). Since the conceptualization of the classification of social class could be various (i.e. without a particular standard definition), the boundaries between the social groups were not always clear cut. Characteristic features of the middle class are sometimes also included as defining the upper class, and vice versa. The encroachment of the middle class on what was traditionally upper class territory can be confirmed by the following: middle class men went into politics (previously thought as the sanctuary of the upper class) after the Reform Act of 1832; Almack’s, the highly exclusive aristocratic sanctum opened its doors to newly-enriched non-nobles in 1835; and the seven public schools which had traditionally provided liberal education to aristocrats (Eton, Harrow, Rugby, Winchester, Charterhouse, Shrewsbury and Westminster)



increased in number up to twenty-five between 1837 and 1865, which seems to suggest more students from non-aristocratic backgrounds had been increasingly accepted to the schools (Morgan 1994: 120-121).

Related to, but not identical with, the notion of social class is that of social status. While 'class' is based on economic criteria, it might be suggested that 'status' is not economic, but a matter of 'tastes', or 'culture' (cf. Smith 1982: 15), such as "social habits", "social manners", "way of life", "education", "dress", or – most importantly in the present context – "language" (Mugglestone 1995: 78, cf. Milroy 1987: 32). Here the scholars' opinions seem to emphasize that status is quite different from economic matters:

- (7) Good order was deemed the foundation of all good things, of 'politeness' as well as peace, and social relationships, when they were talked about, were conceived of in moral as well as in social terms.

(Briggs 1959: 9-10)

But is this conceptualization of 'class' and 'status' simply as economic and non-economic respectively really valid and reliable? It would be wrong to suggest that these two bases should be segregated in terms of 'economy'. In other words, it would be wrong to suggest that the two are entirely unrelated. This is because it seems that almost all the issues which relate to status could not be understood unless there is a certain economic basis to support them. Therefore, although there are some differences as to whether class and status are directly or indirectly related to economy, economic factors are important in both: whether it is more direct economic power or more behavioural norms, both are the sources of social grouping.

In the quotation above, Briggs (1959: 9-10) suggests that 'politeness' is one of the senses of morality which has a strong connection to manners, and manners were said to be linked to status. Therefore, politeness has a certain connection to status, which at the same time, can be related to 'class' and 'economy'. Scott (2000) suggests that even though there are opinions which indicate the difference between

social 'status' and economy-oriented 'class', the determinants of status include matters which definitely have a certain relationship with economic matters:

- (8) Most typically, a person's status follows from what Weber called the 'style of life'.... A style of life involves specific types of dress and bodily adornment, types and sizes of house, areas of residence, clothing, accent, methods of cooking and eating, and so on.

(Scott 2000: 24)

This suggests that clear-cut distinctions between class and status are hard to establish, and the boundaries between the two concepts are vague.

### **1.1.2 Social and geographic mobility**

One thing which seems to characterize this period is that some of the people in the lower social categories yearned for the status of the higher ranked groups, and such status was also associated with the speech patterns of the social elite. The ideal speech with its associations of 'proper' and 'polite' (Beal 2004: 170) behaviour was regarded as the outcome of "the ease and elegance of genteel life" (Perry 1775: vi, cf. Sheridan 1938: 285 cited in Beal 2004: 171). Such speech was also related to the social structure of urban areas, particularly London (Mugglestone 1995: 9, Beal 2004: 169-170). The speech and writing of high status speakers in urban areas was the main model of language adopted in grammar books in the LModE period, which were written for the purpose of meeting the demands of the uneducated people, that is, the people in the lower classes (Beal 2004: 171). As a result, people tried to imitate the behaviour and manners of the gentility (Stone 1984: 409). Speech patterns became a yardstick to measure social advancement.

However, it is difficult for the lower classes to know the behaviour of the higher when there is little contact between the two. In this regard, the contribution of transportation systems which connected isolated places to convey not only people,



but also goods, resources and materials was hugely important. It was critical to facilitate the smooth running of economic and political activities.

Road construction developed rapidly after the eighteenth century. The Turnpike Trust had played a leading and pioneering role for the development during the period between 1730 and 1780 (Beal 2004: 7). The development of roads resulted in increased opportunities to travel for social and economic purposes. Cargo ships had already been in operation aiding the industrialization process, and this encouraged the construction of a more developed road system to distribute goods and workers (McCord 1991: 86). Stage-coaches used on the road were to reduce journey time dramatically and enhance the work efficiency. For example, the earlier journey time from London to Edinburgh (around 10 – 12 days) was reduced to 42 hours after the new system was introduced (McCord 1991: 86).

A significant impact of the opening of a railway system in 1825 and the continual development afterwards was that it made it possible to convey people and materials at one time, between historically isolated places. The miles of track constructed steadily increased; the total mileage reached 6000 miles by the mid-century, and it even doubled by 1871, while the number of the passengers quadrupled (McCord 1991:219, 324). Since it is said that the third-class cars were the most popular in attracting the passengers, it can be estimated that the service contributed to the convenience of relatively lower income groups, benefiting their social and economic life. McCord (1991: 324) also notes the ripple effects to postal, telegraph, and publishing services. This is no wonder because the facilities of the railway network, such as wired lines and stations, were also matched by the needs of these services. Most importantly of all for the purpose of this thesis, the development of the railway meant that more people from different geographical locations came into contact, and communicated with each other. Later in 1881 a tram system was also developed to support transportation mainly between towns and suburbs where a significant part of the professional workforce, i.e. the emerging middle class, lived (Beal 2004: 7). Thanks in part to the development of the transportation systems available, social and geographic mobility increased, which in turn increased the opportunity to communicate with others.

### 1.1.2.1 Urbanization

Typical images of the Industrial Revolution might be the change-over from handcraft manufacturing to machine-based production, or from agriculture in rural areas to commerce and industry in towns (cf. Görlach 2001: 8), the transition of the markers of power from land to money (Swift 1710), the prosperity for self-taught, self-made men, the transition from aristocracy to plutocracy, or an increased prosperity for the middle class (cf. Beal 2004: 5).

Prior to the Industrial Revolution, there existed several large towns, for example, Canterbury, Coventry, Exeter and Ipswich (Darby 1973: 243, 459 in Görlach 2001: 8). Then, gradually, areas in the midlands became more developed during the period between 1700 - 1801 (Darby 1973: 307, 311). Towns such as Liverpool and Manchester had increased their population rapidly (Görlach 2001: 9). Since it is said that the provincial towns, during the period around 1700, immediately before the Industrial Revolution, were located in quite isolated places where large scale development seems to be not so convenient (Borsay 1977), it is estimated that transfer of people and substances, by and large, tended to be restricted to neighbouring towns or within each of the towns themselves. In fact, Briggs' (1959: 43) description of the situation during the late eighteenth century provides strong support for this, noting: "The towns grew as a result of local movements from the surrounding countryside, not of great treks from the countryside to the factories and furnaces". On the other hand, however, newly developing communities attracted inhabitants who were villagers by origin (Briggs 1959: 36). In fact, a large number of people who were employed in the new towns came not only from the neighbouring areas, but also distant places. In addition, as noted above, the new towns were concentrated more in the northern part of England:

- (9) As the [nineteenth: HO] century went by, the North gained enormously in importance, largely as a result of water power, the growth of the coal and iron industries, and improvements in the transport system.

(Briggs 1959: 50)

It is easy to recognise that these transitions and changes in society and the development of traffic construction were interconnected.

The previously most populated towns in the medieval period such as Norwich, Bristol and Coventry lost their ranking as the most populous areas to the new industrial cities such as Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham. (Darby 1973: 243, 459) The newly appeared cities almost always emerged as a result of the Industrial Revolution.

### **1.1.2.2 Changes in communication media**

The nineteenth century was also the time when more people had more access to written media. The development of steam printing was to be extensively utilized to print *The Times* in 1814, and the reduction of stamp duty made the condition better especially for newspaper companies to do business (Cook 2005: 130). As a result, during the period of 1815 - 1885, 37 provincial presses are listed as being launched (Cook 2005: 131-132). The Postal service system started its official operation in 1840 (Beal 2004: 9). In addition, the enactment of the Public Libraries Act in 1850 gave people free access to books (Görlach 1999: 14). While the prices of books on the market were still expensive for most people (Görlach 1999: 14), such developments nonetheless helped more people to get access to written media and encourage their interest in the papers, providing more people more opportunities to engage with the standard written language. The production of paper advanced from 11,000 tons in 1800 to 100,000 in 1860 and to 652,000 in 1900 (Bailey 1996: 40). The circulation of *The Times* had expanded from 5,000 copies in 1815 to 10,000 in 1834, to 23,000 in 1844 and to 40,000 in 1851 (*Encyclopædia*

*Britannica* 1854/57, cited from Görlach 1999: 13), and in 1854, 51,648 copies were sold (*Encyclopædia Britannica* 1858: 188, cited from Görlach 1999: 13). Thus, the written media was to contribute to the development of a notion of standard language, and of the dissemination of the standard language, while the transportation system was to encourage both oral contact between people, and the distribution of written media. Further promotion of the standard written and spoken language occurred through technological developments. Cables for telegraphs appeared throughout the major cities in the world in 1872 (Beal 2004: 9); the telephone and phonograph were invented in 1876 and 1877 respectively (Beal 2004: 9); and last, but not least, radio was made practicable in 1895 (Beal 2004: 9).

As already discussed in section 1.1.1 above, the basic means of people's livelihood during the LModE period was changing from the primary (e.g. crop and dairy farming, Koditschek 1990: 29-30) to the secondary industries (e.g. the textile, steel, coal, shipbuilding industries, Beal 2004: 6). This does not necessarily mean the primary industry disappeared. Rather, the first worked in a supportive role to the second, because the two industries were in a give-and-take relationship:

- (10) Good harvests stimulated credit, gave an impetus to industry, and kept the urban population contented. Bad harvests led to increased imports of food, a restriction of credit, and industrial unrest.

(Briggs 1959: 36)

As Briggs describes, the two sets of industries co-exist in a balanced cycle. As a result, disruption to the cycle may bring undesirable outcomes, resulting in what Perkin describes as a "slump explosion" (Perkin 1969: 164). Therefore, as Mugglestone points out (1995: 270), the large scale industrialization which occurred in this period yielded cities, where commercial and industrial activities became prosperous, yet other (depopulated, rural) areas, where traditional agricultural economies were based, often suffered. The benefits of successful industrialization may be seen in the following description of Manchester:

- (11) Manchester at that very time was giving a lead to the rest of the country, not only towards 'the attainment of entire FREEDOM OF TRADE', but towards 'a comprehensive system of SANATORY REGULATION to secure healthfulness, cleanliness, and order in our vast urban population', and 'a comprehensive and liberal system of SECULAR EDUCATION combining moral training with intellectual instruction, and open to all classes, without distinction of sect or party.'

(Perkin 1969: 164, referring to the translation of Faucher, L.

(1844). *Manchester in 1844; Its Present Condition and Future Prospects*. Translated by 'A Member of the Manchester Athenæum', (preface) pp. xiii-xiv.)

Such a society, with a greater educational infrastructure, and increased social contact, suggests that urban ways of communication must have gradually developed and changed from the rural past.

### **1.1.3 Gender and the notion of the 'proper lady'**

By the end of the eighteenth century the sense of a 'Proper Lady' had already been established in British society (Poovey 1984). Several descriptions of femininity during the period of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are identified. But the situation was not consistent throughout the period. In the beginning of the LModE period the society was much more 'patriarchy – based', especially in terms of the land-ownership system of the previous period (Trumbach 1978). Consequently, it seems that women (and children, who were also properties under paternal rights, cf. Trumbach 1978: 119-120), were, on balance, sidelined. Women also suffered from unequal conditions such as the lack of opportunity for education.

Because of this, perhaps, women's language was characterized as full of malapropisms, non-standard uses, and irregular spelling (Görlach 2001: 57).

But women were also sometimes regarded as the possessors of particular sensibilities associated with speakers of higher status varieties. Görlach (2001: 57) suggests that women were perceived as having more tender tastes in "fine"<sup>1</sup> things (including language), and senses such as "modesty" and "beauty"<sup>2</sup> were typical characteristics. Such things often characterized descriptions of women in the Late Modern period, as in the following:

- (12) There was not only an art, but an eloquence, in it: how  
peculiarly does this apply to the modesty of young females!  
(Anon 1811: 114)

The needs of women in a particular social class drove the publication of etiquette or manner books in the Late Modern period. In this genre of book, the relationship between ladies and properness is frequently highlighted. Ann Murry (1778), in her book titled *Mentoria: or, The Young Ladies Instructor, in Familiar Conversations on Moral and Entertaining Subjects*, tried to underline the need for ladies to have proper knowledge of "orthography" and senses such as "politeness", "civility", "gratitude", "modesty", "diffidence", and "deference" (Murry 1778: 2, 35, 36). In 1811 an anonymous author published a similar book arguing that young females needed 'modesty' in their conversation, and females should be able "to discern the degrees of sensitivity" (Anon 1811: 131). Publications of a similar kind of book continued throughout the nineteenth century. Another anonymous author goes so far as to suggest that ladies have certain a natural characteristic of purity in their behaviour (Anon 1829). Mrs H. Mackarness (1876: 121, cited in Mugglestone 1995: 169) says that it is important for ladies to adopt the language of purity in

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<sup>1</sup> Görlach refers to Gildon, C. (1718) *Complete Art of Poetry*. London: printed for Charles Rivington.

<sup>2</sup> Görlach refers to Monthly Review for June 1758: 588-590, quoted from Brüggemann 1797: 309-310)



society. Mrs Sangster (1882: 79, also cited in Mugglestone 1995: 169) provides similar descriptions in terms of the relationship between ladies and feminine senses.

Many of the descriptions of femininity relate to a particular way of speaking, some of which focus more on details of pronunciation. Buchanan (1762) notes that ladies should learn the proper pronunciation and grammar of their own language (1762: xxxi). Vandenhoff (1862: 16-18) notes that H-Dropping was a fatal error which can cause a woman to lose the status of 'lady'. The importance of /h/ in this regard is likewise noted by David Charles Bell (1885). It can be said that the speech of females is, as far as the metaphors used are concerned, viewed quite positively. This is particularly true once they are compared to those associated with male speech. Such a contrast in the evaluation of female and male speech seems to start being recognized widely from around the turn of the nineteenth century (cf. Mugglestone 1995). Although there are some who had already noticed such differentiated impressions before that period (Buchanan 1762), it seems that the distinction had not been diffused widely, given the relatively infrequent descriptions of femininity and linguistic variation prior to this. After all, it is arguable that the social outcomes of the newly established capitalist – based society had encouraged such notions more (Mugglestone 1995: 160-207). During that period, as time went by, more and more concrete, clear differences between female and male behaviour (including those related to language) were the subject of overt social comment.

Such differences and comments about femininity are connected with a sense of ostensible 'rating' or status. This prejudice can be seen in the descriptions below. Vandenhoff, after noting "Grace of speech is particularly attractive in woman", suggests:

- (13) The speaking of her native language with purity and elegance of pronunciation, in an agreeable tone of voice, with a sparkling accentuation and an easy, fluent, utterance are distinguishing marks of a good education, and carry with them the *prestige* of refinement and high breeding.

(Vandenhoff 1862: v)

This is a typical example which expresses the connection between women and language. We can see that the general, characteristic social images of women are also applied to women's language. Bell (1885: 'preface' page) suggests ladies' language is "gay" and "morally good".

#### **1.1.4 Education**

Education was thought to be important as a marker of "attitudes, expectations, and behavioural norms" (Mugglestone 1995: 279). Although we can see certain remarkable steps and achievements in terms of the development of the infrastructure of education, the process was not easy and most of the particularly substantial results did not come about until the latter part of the LModE period. In the eighteenth century, the basis of traditional education among the poor was the charity schools and the Sunday schools in each locale (Briggs 1959: 16). The charity school was supported by people who volunteered to teach reading and writing to others (mainly the poor). The Sunday school was organized in churches partly for the propagation of religion-based morals. There was no universal education system established at that time, since society still kept a certain tinge of the previous system of paternalism and social position (cf. Trumbach 1978, Briggs 1959). It has been suggested that there might have been a kind of fear that if the poor became educated, they might not have been obedient in following their superiors, disturbing the social order, since people at that time, especially at the beginning of the LModE period, seemed to have wanted to keep the traditional social position stable (Morgan 1994: 92). It was not seen as necessary for the poor to get wider knowledge, and such ideas prevented a more developed and advanced system of education (Briggs 1959). Mugglestone (1995: 266) says that "a random collection of dame schools, ragged schools, charity schools, private schools, grammar schools..., Sunday schools, monitorial schools (after 1801), Nonconformist academies, as well as private tutors, all existed in uneven distribution, and uneven quality, over the country". In the latter part of the nineteenth century, possibly as a result of increasing awareness of the



great variability in educational provision, the British government set out Acts to arrange more equally based education. In 1870 the first major Education Act was issued to set up more school boards and build more schools. Although school fees were charged, the poor could be exempted from payment. The Education Act in 1880 made education compulsory for children between ages of 5 and 10. In the Act of 1889 The Board of Education was set up. After other Acts which helped to issue more grants, the Acts in 1893 opened a way to establish schools for physically handicapped persons to satisfy their educational needs (Cook 2005: 110). Formal manuals such as John Gill's *Introductory Text-Book to School Education, Method, and School Management* [10<sup>th</sup> edn.] (1870, cited in Mugglestone 1995: 285) were demanded in great numbers. The instruction which was provided in the books encouraged people to promote a national education system. The information included issues such as what a model teacher should be, and the movement to a more unified national education system gradually developed (Mugglestone 1995: 285).

Earlier in the nineteenth century, parliamentary acts to establish a certain public-aided system of education were passed (Briggs 1959: 336). In 1833 the (Whig) government made a grant of £20,000 to be shared between two societies (the British and Foreign School Society (established in 1807) and the National Society (established in 1811)), and the grant was increased in 1839 to £30,000 (Briggs 1959: 336, McCord 1991: 178-179). Nevertheless, it took more time to realize more substantial results for people in general to feel the benefits of this new educational system. It is said that the reason for this slow progress was mainly because of the deep-seated aristocratic tradition (Perkin 1969: 292-293).

In spite of this persistent conservative tradition, the newly emerging liberal, democratic movement towards education for all gradually developed. Regulations to launch good practice for a teaching profession were also laid down in 1846 (Briggs 1959: 337). The number of those who agitated for the expansion of elementary education "grew from 675,000, one in seventeen of the population, in 1818 to 2,144,000, one in eight, in 1851" (Perkin 1969: 295), but it is said that the arrival of the universal (elementary) education system was not until 1870 (Beal 2004: 5, Görlach 1999: 6-7), possibly stimulated by the enactment of the Public Schools Act

in 1869 (Perkin 1969: 300). This achievement seems to be connected to the firm establishment of the position of the middle class in society: in the public schools, the middle class tended to be shut out (Perkin 1969: 296-297, Mugglestone 1995: 270-271).

Instruction in 'good' language was one of the important subjects which an education provided. It is said that there were some standard pronunciations established by the end of the nineteenth century which were especially regarded as markers of 'educatedness'. They are, for example, "the presence of [h] where deemed proper, the use of [ɪŋ] rather than [ɪn] in words such as *walking*, articulating words such as *servant* as [sɜ:rvənt] and not [sɑ:vənt], (i.e. variation in the use of low and low-mid front vowels before 'historic' /r/: HO) and, amongst other things, the avoidance of intrusive /r/". (Mugglestone 1995: 258) People who could distinguish these differences and pronounce words as the standard required were regarded as 'high status'; the textbook which provided this kind of information indicated the correct form. (Mugglestone 1995: 259-260) The descriptions are quite clear. For example, in terms of [h], Vandenhoff notes the following.

- (14) The omission of this aspirate in its proper place is a gross vulgarism in speech, a mark of inferior education, and is calculated to produce a great prejudice against the offender in the minds of all persons of refinement.

(Vandenhoff 1862: 16)

Actually there are descriptions which note in some detail the variable pronunciation of such shibboleths. However, even in such cases, the authors tended to frame the uses in certain patterned rules. Bell (1860: 53-54) admitted that 'the Aspirate H' "is very irregularly used in many parts of England". Then he pointed out: "but the succeeding vowel makes it heard, and carries it distinctly to the ears of the most distant auditors". A similar description can be seen in Thomas Sheridan's A

*Rhetorical Grammar of the English Language* (1781) and in *An Attempt to Render the Pronunciation of the English Language* by William Smith (1795).

People whose language was consistent with that of the textbook were normally to be admired as educated speakers; it is generally said that such people were confined more to the Public school (Mugglestone 1995: 267) and the students who went to the Public school were normally in rich families which produced more gentlemen and ladies of a high social standing. The stereotypical relationship between the Public school and proper pronunciation was indicated as late as 1869 in *Good Society* (Mugglestone 1995: 267), but the relationship between the Public school and gentleman status had already been pointed out by Sydney Smith in the *Edinburgh Review* in 1810 (Mugglestone 1995: 268).

The educational opportunities in cities and rural areas were not equal. It was relatively difficult to provide a sophisticated education in rural places compared to that in cities. Nevertheless, people gradually came to possess what was called “polish” (Mugglestone 1995: 274) with a good education. Such pioneering activity was by and large restricted to urban areas:

- (15) Mitchinson notes, for instance, of George Hayton, a pupil at Durham Grammar School in the 1840’s: ‘he was the son of a Cumberland Estatesman, i.e. yeoman, or small freeholder... He came to us a ruddy, round faced, flaxen haired lad, but developed into a fine manly character, and took polish well.’ (Mugglestone 1995: 274, cited from Unpublished memoirs, from the Mitchinson Archive, Pembroke College, Oxford, ii: ‘School Reminiscences’, fos. 16-17)

### 1.1.5 Summary

So far this chapter has looked at the social situation in the LModE period. Events which had occurred during the time were said to be connected to changes associated with social factors such as class, status, etc. At the same time, the notion

of 'correct' language had more and more attracted peoples' attention throughout the changing society. As a result, certain social factors were connected to language reflecting the period, society, and people's attitude. In the next section, this chapter focuses on the issue of language ideology, especially in terms of grammar.

## **1.2 Language ideology and the treatment of grammar**

In section 1.1 several important social developments in the LModE period were described. One such development concerns the issue of a correct and standard language, which is in turn related to issues such as propriety, learning, gentility, and politeness. There is one thing which is related to most of these issues: grammar. This section considers the treatment of the grammar of English in the LModE period.

### **1.2.1 Prescriptivism and the emerging standard**

It is said that by the end of the seventeenth century, at latest, there emerged a certain recognition of 'standard English' in terms of the written language (Mugglestone 1995: 10). Mugglestone (1995: 10) also suggests that this recognition was to induce the proposal of establishing an official academy of English language by Jonathan Swift. As a result, the norms of English would be considered more widely, and this can be regarded as an important connection to the ideas and rules of 'correct English usage', 'proper English', 'the best speakers', etc. later in the eighteenth century. At that time Swift (1712) wanted to establish certain fixed criteria which could show what correct English was:

- (16) Standardisation, as Swift perceived, prevents or inhibits change and variation, and the ideology of standardisation is inimical to change and variation. Therefore, a label like

'Standard English' is a rather loose and pre-scientific label. What Standard English actually is thought to be depends on acceptance (mainly by the most influential people) of a common core of linguistic conventions, and a good deal of fuzziness remains around the edge.

(Milroy and Milroy 1992: 26)

It was said that the standard could be mastered by study and it was said to link to and to identify certain social positions (Blake 1996:240). As suggested in previous sections of this chapter, the sense of politeness was, during the period, a further issue of the time. Politeness was thought of as ideal in certain social groups, and it is not difficult to connect this kind of politeness to the concept of standard and correct language; on the other hand, the opposite, vulgar speech was regarded as non-standard (Blake 1996: 237-238). Vulgarity and non-standard speech were sometimes equated to childish language (Blake 1996: 238), and therefore probably also to those more generally in a socially lower or less powerful position. At the same time, polite, elegant, and / or standard language was not necessarily restricted to the upper class, even though this tendency seems to be implicit. This is because throughout the period of LModE, the image and more crucially the power of the traditional upper class aristocracy had faded. Instead, more and more, the (new) middle class had become socially more powerful. Especially, the people who succeeded by growing rich in the more capitalist economy were admired as almost equal to the noble families of the upper class in terms of status: "Newly enriched commercial and professional men made significant inroads into the peerage, Commons and civil service."<sup>3</sup> (Morgan 1994: 92) Moreover, Morgan (1994: 92-94) describes that the newly emerging influential group had their own sense of solidarity, a challenging spirit and pride against the traditional aristocrats in the competitive capitalist society. In such circumstances, to obtain proper 'etiquette' was a weapon to establish and

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<sup>3</sup> Morgan refers to P. J. Jupp, 'The Landed Elite and Political Authority in Britain, ca. 1760-1850', *Journal of British Studies*, XXIX (January 1990) 53-79, and Mandler, P. (1990). *Aristocratic Government in the Age of Reform, 1830-1852*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

develop their ideal status, one which was not given passively, but gained by their own efforts. Regarding the etiquette, it is obvious that 'proper' language was counted as one of the important markers.

The period of the eighteenth century and thereafter was very important for the development of the English grammatical tradition. At first, during the period when the grammar book had not come into wide use, only a limited number of people used these texts, since they probably fulfilled no particular social need or interest among the general public. But such a situation seemed to have changed in the eighteenth century. More people became interested in the correctness of language, which was brought about by the advent of the newly emerging industrial society together with the notion of social class and status, as we have seen. In that circumstance, what was valued was 'gentility' (Mugglestone 1995: 83). Gentility seemed to be connected to correct behavior and language (Mugglestone 1995: 83) which were basically regarded as a property of the upper class. This desire for gentle status had increased among the middle and lower classes (Morgan 1994: 93, Mugglestone 1995: 83), "by copying the education, manners, and behavior of the gentility" (Stone 1984: 409). Grammar books came to be published by a range of people - clerics, teachers, scientists and lawyers (Finegan 1998: 542). As we can see, the authors were not necessarily expert professionals of English grammar, and in addition, the criteria which established what the function of the grammar should be had not been established clearly; referring to the work of Campbell (1776), Finegan (1998: 542) notes:

- (17) Campbell raised questions about the central criteria for ascertaining correctness and establishing a standard: the role of writing and speaking; the choice of models; and the distinct responsibilities of grammarians and critics.

(Finegan 1998: 542)

Despite significant differences in content and objectives, there were also various features which grammars of the period had in common, the foremost of



which was that they tried to prescribe rules to ascertain which were 'correct'. The prescriptive strategy covered many elements of the grammar: as well as syntax, matters of pronunciation, which were more difficult to codify, were 'fixed' in certain forms/codes. As is well known, the codification led to a series of polarizing views about the language. For example, as noted above, there is an issue about 'h'.

Authors who point out variation in (h) are quite numerous. H. Henry's *Poor Letter H* was originally published in 1854, and the reprints went into many editions, over 43,000 copies by the mid 1860's (Mugglestone 1995: 130). Mugglestone (1995: 130) also notes that there were other books published which deal in particular with 'h' such as *Harry Hawkins* and *H Book*. The articulation of 'r' was also frequently taken up in books such as *Poor Letter R* by Robert Ruskin Rogers (1855) and *Mind Your H's and Take Care of Your R's* by Charles William Smith (1866). Besides these, the issues of these two pronunciations are described in many other more general guides to correct usage such as *Practical Phonology* by John Jones (1701), *A Rhetorical Grammar of the English Language* by Thomas Sheridan (1781), *A Pronouncing and Spelling Dictionary* by William Johnston (1764), etc. Mugglestone notes:

- (18) The use of [h], in modern English, has become one of the principal signals of social identity, its presence in initial positions associated almost inevitably with the 'educated' and 'polite', while its loss commonly triggers popular connotations of the 'vulgar', the 'ignorant', and the 'lower class'.

(Mugglestone 1995: 107)

An anonymous author (as 'Oxoniensis' 1856: 16) also says:

- (19) It is thought, by some silly persons, that it is aristocratic to mispronounce this letter, and the efforts of caricaturists have, rather than otherwise, perpetuated the error. But nothing is



less true, for the gentleman is above all things to be distinguished by an excellent and pure pronunciation.

(Oxoniensis 1856: 16)

Although it might be supposed that the grammar should be, in principle, described objectively, in reality, as already stated, in most cases the authors organized the description around their own view of what was correct (Finegan 1998: 546-7). This author – led grammatical tradition was connected to social factors: the ‘linguistically ideal’ variety was to be recognized as socially proper and good, while the others were to be labelled improper and bad. For instance, Johnson (1747: a2, i) argues that the spoken variety which is nearest to the form in written text is elegant, and the speakers who have mastered the correct form are to be called gentlemen and ladies. Spoken language, however, is likely to change by its very nature.

- (20) It [spoken language: HO] grows, matures, assimilates, changes, incorporates, excludes, develops, languishes, decays, dies utterly, with the societies to which it owes its being.

(Ellis 1869: 17)

Why did such prescriptive grammars appear? It is because there existed a certain social demand to create such a product as a grammar book. As already explained, there was a trend which meant people wanted to know more about the proper use of language during that time. Brittain (1788) seems to suggest that certain situations which represented the doctrine of correctness could be noticed more in written language. This is easily understandable because written language is more resistant to change. Nevertheless, even in the spoken language, the labelling of good and bad pronunciation can be seen (Ellis 1869: e.g. ch.3, Sweet 1877). ‘Gentility’ was regarded as ideal and language was a marker of such gentility. Attributes such as gentility, nobility, and propriety were normally thought of as the properties of aristocrats or noble families, and the people who sought to learn proper language

were more likely in the middle or low social groups. Webster (1784) thought that a certain guide to the proper treatment of language should be provided for the American nation and the contents of such a text should be simple enough for all to understand. Gough (1754: vii) suggests that grammatical rules are important in connection with language in practice, and grammarians or authors have a significant responsibility to be mediators. A similar thing is also suggested by Buchanan (1762), who even encourages gentlemen readers, especially young ones, to be proud of such a position where they can properly utilize language (Buchanan 1762: xxxvi). As a result, we can understand that the grammarians were often encouraged to provide a simple, clear, and proper model or standard.

The grammarians needed to consider a variety of factors when constructing their texts. The historical, etymological features had to be taken into consideration to make explicit how the language developed and how to better understand the trends and directions of change. In addition, there were the needs of a newly emerging educational system, “a growing demand for English teaching” and “the beginning of specialization in English textbooks” (Michael 1970: 197). A further complicating factor was the developing standard, and the associated doctrine of correctness. Some authors regard standardized models as unrealizable and such uniformity as unrealistic. Robinson (1863: 2), cited in Mugglestone (1995: 312) describes such skeptical views towards pronunciation for example:

- (21) If any teacher expects that he will ever be able to eradicate all traces of such errors, I am afraid that he will be sadly disappointed. The time will never come, most likely, when all the people of Great Britain and Ireland will speak exactly alike, and yet it is for this unattainable uniformity that men are struggling.

A similar idea is also noted by Finegan (1998: 577) in his discussion of Krapp (1908). Furthermore, Webster (1783: 5) acknowledges the existence of regional varieties, noting that given such variation it is difficult to arrange and unite rules into

a certain simplified system (1784: 3). Priestley (1761: vi) compares “the grammar of language” to “the grammar of nature”. He claims that “*Grammar* may be compared to a treatise of *Natural Philosophy*” (1761: vi). It is said that there is the natural law or a law of nature in this world, a certain fixed idea or system which is valid universally. It is a system which results from nature, but there is another phenomenon which must be adduced to account for variability. Priestley defines it as ‘the analogy of language’ (1761: vi).

- (22) but since good authors have adopted different forms of speech, and in a case that admits of no standard but that of ‘custom’, one authority may be of as much weight as another; the ‘analogy of language’ is the only thing to which we can have recourse, to adjust these differences;

(Priestley 1761: vi)

This ‘analogy’ represents the variety and flexibility, which contrast with the former universality and fixedness respectively. Because of this analogy our thoughts and ideas can be expressed in language in different ways and cope with the varied expressions to understand the implications and meanings, even the subtle different details. Finally, there was also an opinion which pointed out the absence of a relation between gentility and grammatical form.

- (23) I do not think that, with respect to precision of expression, or the nice discrimination of delicate distinctions of thought and shades of sentiment, inflected languages have any advantage. These qualities of speech are independent of grammatical form.

(Marsh 1860: 351)

Therefore, even though some grammarians had recognized the difficulty of the situation regarding ‘correct’ or otherwise ‘valid’ variants, some forced themselves to

provide a restricted set of grammatical forms, narrowing down the possible variation to simplified models. As noted in section 1.1 above, the Late Modern period was noted for changes in social organization in Britain. Social structure had been becoming more complex, and social position and status were more subdivided. Language was connected to such distinctions, and variant forms became labelled, or ranked. That is, the matter of more nuanced linguistic superiority and inferiority came to be talked about. The notion of proper, correct language seemed to diffuse more widely. This is the background to the rise of prescriptivism.

The demand for the (prescribed) grammar or text book (mainly for educational reasons) resulted in an increase in publication of such texts (Webster 1783). These books often took examples of 'errors' from the books or writings of authoritative writers. Even Priestley (1761: vi) notes that even good authors allow for variability in language. It is obvious that not all grammarians agreed on which of the forms were better, and which were worse. As a direct effect of the 'doctrine of correctness', 'wrong' usage was focused on. When 'correct' variants were described, normally one single case was listed (Mugglestone 1995: 92). On the other hand, when the 'wrong' ones were outlined, many examples were often listed. Hodgson (1889: iii) in the introductory part in his book *Errors in the Use of English*, notes that while there is a method of education in which correct forms are simply indicated as being necessary to learn, there is also another method, in which wrong uses are provided, and readers can be told to avoid such expressions. Hodgson suggests that it is good for learners to try to find what is wrong and correct such wrong usage, recognizing and distinguishing both the good and bad. He implies that such a bidirectional way of learning may be more effective than trying to memorize correct forms. Likewise, another book *Errors of Pronunciation, and Improper Expressions, used frequently, and chiefly by the Inhabitants of London* (Anon 1817: iii) aims at using a method where establishing concrete errors allows people clearly to discuss what is 'wrong' and why it is wrong. Indeed, it must be difficult to notice 'what is wrong' or 'why it is wrong' by looking only at correct answers. Whether correct or wrong, the contents of the textbook at that time tended to have such a clear fixed distinction. It is clear that this kind of book was quite popular and in demand in the

LModE period, especially in the nineteenth century. Other examples of books which indicate expressions from other publications as expressions which include wrong uses and suggest alternative correct forms are *Modern English literature* (Breen 1857) and *The Bad English of Lindley Murray and Other Writers on the English Language* (Moon 1869). Both of them refer to the writings of authoritative authors at that time who were regarded as a kind of model in terms of writing or expression at least by the authors of the textbook. Finegan (1998: 572-573) provides a list of other similar books, such as *Every-day Errors of Speech* (Meredith 1877). There is even a book entitled *Remarks on the Incidental Ambiguities and False Imports* (Anon 1814) which focuses on the use of the modal auxiliary verb in English, including a section which enumerates the wrong uses. The anonymous author shows inappropriate applications of the modal auxiliary verbs and provides the corresponding alternative appropriate modal auxiliary verbs as follows:

(24)

1. Should [wrong] for would [correct]  
 “We think it a groundless imputation that we should set up against the opera.” (Spectator, No. 278)
2. Would [wrong] for should [correct]  
 “Man found a considerable advantage by this union of many persons to form one family; he therefore judged he would find his account proportionably in an union of many families into one body politic.” (Beauties of Burke, p. 372)
3. Should [wrong] for could [correct]  
 “Who would have thought that the clangorous noise of a Smith’s hammer should have given the first rise to musick?” (Spectator, No. 334)

(Anon 1814: 7, [ ] inserted by HO)

Interestingly, in most cases, the patterns of wrong usage are regarded as quite fixed. For example, Hodgson shows a wrong use of *shall* / *should* and this comes under the similar pattern of the enumerations described by the anonymous author above:

- (25) 'Politics *would* become one network of complicated restrictions so soon as women *shall* succeed in getting their voice preponderant in the State.' – *Spectator*, 24<sup>th</sup> July, 1869, p. 867. [For 'shall' read 'should.']

(Hodgson 1889: 95)

### 1.2.2 Anti-prescriptivism

Despite the popular adoption of prescriptive grammars, there emerged some criticisms pointing out contradictions between prescribed correct usage and real usage. For instance, as noted in section 1.2.1 above, the uniformity of standard pronunciation was thought of by some as unattainable and unrealistic (Robinson. 1863: 2); similarly, while in reality the allegedly correct form of the inflected subjunctive in English - where the verb takes the non-inflected form in the present, e.g. *he have*, *he be*, while in case of the past tense with *be*, the form is *were*, e.g. *I were*, *he were* (Lowth 1762: 50, Lennie 1827: 33) - had not been used by most writers and speakers in most cases for some time:

- (26) in our language, there is no very great use in this distinction of modes; because, for the most part, our little 'signs' do the business, and they never vary in the letters of which they are composed.

When the 'signs' are used, or understood, the verb returns its original, or primitive form, throughout all the persons, numbers, and times.

(Cobbett 1823: 46-47)



By the end of the nineteenth century many scholars had noted that most of the contents in the guidebooks of ‘correct English usage’ did not match the real language use of most English speakers (Matthews 1901: 212, Leonard 1929: 89). Since many textbooks have supplemental titles like ‘for the use of learners’, or ‘for the young’, it is clear that the authors were by and large attending to the trend and need which required simple, easy and clear contents to help learners. It might be said that the grammarians were too eager to match the educational demand, and set their priority on how well the language was prescribed by setting down rules and codifying the standard variety rather than how much the contents reflected the intricate reality. It seems that the pressure of the demand of the prescribed textbook was quite great. What cautious authors could do was to put their ideas as a kind of supplement in a section of their books (e.g. preface, introduction, footnotes, etc.), since the main body of the text was concerned with prescription.

### **1.3 Polite society and polite language**

The prescriptive style was popularly adopted in the writing of grammar books and the related textbooks in the LModE period. However, it is also observed that several authors had noticed ‘correct’ language also has a relationship with politeness, an important social theme of the period. This section deals with the connection between politeness in language and society.

#### **1.3.1 Background**

Many words associated with polite behaviour, such as ‘modesty’, ‘propriety’, and of course ‘politeness’ itself, featured in a subset of the grammar books and books which deal with manners in the LModE period. There was a certain connection between politeness, language, and etiquette, in the period. First of all, this section explores the issue of what politeness was seen to consist of in the LModE period.



Some might wonder if there is difference in terms of politeness from one period of history to the next. The likely answer is 'yes'. Wildeblood and Brinson (1965) note that politeness lies in consideration for others in general, and has no direct connection to actions or manners (Wildeblood and Brinson 1965: 19). However, they add that "it is a matter of history how the leaders of society in each period have fashioned ideals of behaviour into codes to suit themselves" (1965: 19). Since societies change as time goes by, the resultant ideals and codes are also likely to change. Furthermore, as the word 'codes' indicates, a certain institutional or customary nature must also be included. Indeed Wildeblood and Brinson (1965: 14-17) exemplify the differences in changes in markers of polite behaviour between the eighteenth century and the nineteenth century.

- (27) Evidence from numerous treatises on genteel behaviour, memoirs, letters, and not least, contemporary portraits and conversation pieces, all confirm that eighteenth-century society as a whole acknowledged a common pattern of behaviour in matters of deportment. The very erect posture: the hat placed under the arm while the hand is slipped inside the unbuttoned waistcoat; the fan held in poses advocated by teachers of deportment

(Wildeblood and Brinson 1965: 14-15)

- (28) In a sense an understanding of background atmosphere and social circumstance is more important in portraying the nineteenth century than any other period, because the time is so close to our own. What separates us from them is mental outlook rather than physical behaviour

(Wildeblood and Brinson 1965: 17)

The differentiation depending on times and societies is clearly recognized. The link between language and politeness, and more specifically respect, is undeniable in the

case of the honorific in Japanese, for instance; moreover, such kinds of connections can also be confirmed in other languages (for example, Ponapean, as noted by Garvin and Riesenberg 1952). Consequently, in these cases cultural factors are shown to be quite influential. As for the relationship between language, politeness and specific cultures, the following description in the LModE period, as an example, seems to be reliable, though it is important to notice that there always exists the general sense of politeness, i.e. the human's natural 'consideration for others', to a certain extent as its basis.

- (29) To write well and correct, and in a pleasing style, is another part of polite education. As to the correctness and elegance of your writing, attention to grammar does the one, and to the best authors, the other.

(Anon 1813?<sup>4</sup>: 209)

In sum, it may be possible to think that there are two ways to conceptualize politeness, one more basic and general, and the other more detailed, localized, and substantially influenced by social factors. In what follows, I refer to these two distinct but related phenomena as **universal** and **variable** politeness. The universal sense reflects a basic human characteristic of thoughtfulness and consideration for others. The variable sense is more culturally influenced than the general one. Terms associated with politeness like 'correct', 'appropriate', 'civilized', 'well-bred', 'cultured', 'polished', 'urbane', 'elegant', 'sophisticated', 'gentle', 'mannered', etc. must be categorized into this aspect. Consequently, the former category is more for those aspects of politeness which every human being possesses by nature, while the latter is more for those which are more strongly associated with specific social groups at specific times in specific cultures. We will see that most senses which are described in the books in LModE period are variable and institutionalized.

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<sup>4</sup> The published year is not described, but there is a hand written '1813' as an indication of the date of the presentation of the book to a person called Gillian Maclaine.

### 1.3.2 Standardisation as the driving force of politeness

Standardization may be seen as a kind of social product of the period, and this standard language was connected to the variable and institutionalized sense of politeness. The prosperous middle class had promoted the standardization of language which then permeated into other sectors of society (Knowles 1997: 119). In the beginning of the eighteenth century Swift (1712: 8) in *A Proposal for Correcting, Improving and Ascertaining the English Tongue* contrasts polite persons who possessed polish and refinement with persons who “multiplied Abuses and Absurdities” and whose usage “offends against every Part of Grammar”; this relates proper (correct) grammar to the former polite group. Görlach (2001: 32) suggests that many grammarians at that time “aimed at both correctness and politeness in general” (cf. also McKnight 1928: 389, 391): the grammarians tried to show correct models in their books which are equal to standardized models. Such prescribed forms were related to politeness at that time. The following quotation tells that ‘propriety’ (appropriate) language is generally steady. Although it might be interpreted that ‘propriety’ is differentiated from ‘refine’ here, and even ‘polite’, ‘propriety’ can be regarded as a kind of ‘standard’ (and therefore polite). Still, it is also possible to take the quotation to mean that ‘propriety’ language is used by the ‘polite’ unless the ‘modish’, ‘innovated’ usages appear.

- (30) The polite are always catching modish innovations, and the learned depart from established forms of speech, in hope of finding or making better; ... but there is a conversation above grossness and below refinement, where propriety resides,

(Johnson 1765: 20)

There is also another view which connects standard language and politeness. As already noted, there were grammarians who thought the uses of language could not be fixed by nature. As a result, such a perspective was to judge that the ‘purity’ or ‘perfection’ as a standard form was an illusion, or in other words, that it will always

be vague, “in a mutable and fluctuating state” (Martin’s *Physico-Grammatical Essay on the Propriety and Rationale of the English Tongue* (date unknown) cited by Starnes and Noyes 1946: 160). Martin relates the transition to factors of politeness, and suggests there emerges a flexible, ever-changing aspect of politeness. This double-layered characteristic is involved in the other double nature of politeness: universal and variable. These observations give us a glimpse of how complex the world of politeness is. In any case, politeness and standard language were regarded as basics in terms of ideal behaviour: note the following from Sweet, at the end of the nineteenth century which regards standard in the same light as politeness:

- (31) A vulgarism and the corresponding standard or polite  
expression are equally grammatical

(Sweet 1891: 5; emphasis added)

This situation seems to suggest that it was quite difficult to be polite and at the same time use non-standard English in English society at that time!

Through the relationship of the standard language and politeness, we can see the strong influence of social and cultural factors. Certain pronunciations and phrases combined with certain gestures, manners, fashions, and circumstances, for example, are recognized as polite in the society. It is estimated that the majority of people from the middle class, along with enthusiastic upper and upper-middle classes, tried to learn culturally specific politeness strategies and standard English utilizing the grammar books (Görlach 1999: 10).

### 1.3.3 Guides to polite behaviour

In the Late Modern period, increased social mobility, and the emergence of a capitalist society, meant an increase in the number of and a widening of the social background of participants involved in diplomatic meetings and negotiations, and in commercial public relations. Such socioeconomic developments contributed to the emergence of books of manners and etiquette which told readers how to behave on

occasions where they were negotiating with others. For example, the anonymous author of *The New Letter Writer* (1813?) tells readers what is appropriate and what is not regarding subjects like business, friendship, trade, advice, etc. in different styles of letter writing. This book contains a supplement 'The Principles of Politeness', whose contents suggest how we should behave to be polite. There are several things identified there which are connected to politeness, such as 'modesty', 'correctness' and 'elegancy'. 'Language' is also related to politeness, as argued in section 1.3.1. Another book, *The Rules of Civility* (Anon 1703) describes how a person should behave on social occasions. The guidelines are explained in chapters whose titles include: 'How we are to demean at our Entrance into a Nobleman's House, how at his Door, and how in his Anti-Chambers', 'What regulates our Conversation in Company', 'What we are to observe at Play', 'What at a Ball', etc. Although the chapter headings look quite prescriptive, the advice itself is presented more mildly. For example, the first chapter 'The Design of Treatise, and in what Civility consists' explains the importance of modest behaviour and of making people happy. It also points out that the real politeness is not in mere outward appearance, but simultaneously in the mind:

- (32) Civility, which we propose to treat of in this Book, is nothing but the Modesty and *Decorum* that every Man ought to observe both in his Words and Actions. It is not (in my opinion) to be expected that we should concern our selves with the *Good Grace*, Air, and Attraction, that is many times conspicuous in the Actions of several Persons, who by a particular, and natural Felicity, do please every body in every thing they do: NO certain Rules can be prescrib'd for the Acquisition of that Faculty, as proceeding merely from the liberality of Nature.

To please the corporal Eye, is no great matter, unless, at the same time, we can make our selves grateful to the Eye

of the Mind; and therefore, that outward Grace is not to be look'd upon as the true Principle of *Politeness*;

(Anon 1703: 1)

The gist of his indication here is that Civility and politeness cannot be acquired without consideration for others. A book titled *The Secretary's Assistant* (The Author of the Peerage & Baronetage Charts & Co. 1826) provides the written format of letters to persons of different ranks and classes like The King, Marquises, Clergymen, Lady Mayoress, etc. Most of the contents of such guides were typically formal, and involved almost fixed words and phrases for particular ceremonies (Urquhart 1870: 5). Urquhart even said that an individual “cannot be polite without an established ceremonial which all are bound to follow” (1870: 9). Although Urquhart seems to want to develop a more universal point of view of politeness in the book, he tries to connect such behaviour to particular situations, i.e. politics or diplomatic issues. McIntosh (1998: 160) also regards ceremony and manners (as issues of a particular society) as the bases of politeness in the eighteenth century. While the manner of delivery of this information can by and large be rather prescriptive, the writers seem to agree that their ideas are based on the general, universal aspect of humans: a thoughtful attitude to others.

The point that such guides to polite behaviour intended to suggest was that in instances of socialization, for example, or business negotiations, if the work is progressed with polite behaviour and manners, it could result in success. Stapleton (1876), discussing the Foreign Affairs Committee, regarded politeness as “an Element of Power”. Nevertheless, it is worth recognizing that although variable, institutionalised politeness was influential, this does not necessarily mean that universal, general politeness was not a factor. When the variable aspect of politeness is taken up as described above, it might give an impression that the latent general aspect seems to be weaker compared to the institutional one regarding during the period of the LModE. However, the former general aspect of politeness was to rise gradually after the latter half of the eighteenth century (McIntosh 1998: 161).



In the eighteenth century, polite behaviour appeared to be linked primarily with (the behaviour of) the upper or the upper-middle class, while the others, that is, those below the middle-middle class, were left out of consideration. However in the nineteenth century, concerns about manners and etiquette became more widespread, so more of the general public was to be taken into consideration. Most of the commentary on politeness in spoken language was quite prescriptive, as illustrated by the following:

- (33) In speaking, the tone should be adopted to the subject spoken of, and to the persons addressed; an elevated tone announces pride and insolence, while a very low tone is indicative of childish timidity; and as one should never speak but in order to be heard, it is absurd either to talk at the highest pitch of the voice, or to mutter through the teeth.

The pronunciation should always be firm, mild, and agreeable; by speaking but little, pronouncing the words distinctly, and placing the emphasis on the proper syllables, a correct and pleasing accent will be formed.

(De La Salle 1862: 19-21)

As we can see the description is very much associated with instruction: Anderson (1861) and De La Salle (1862) described their own guides as rules.

## **1.4 Research method**

### **1.4.1 The period of study - Why Late Modern English?**

Beal (2004: 89) uses the phrase “Doctrine of Correctness” to describe at least two aspects of life in the Late Modern English period, since the phrase can be applied to both social and linguistic norms. In terms of the former, there had been a



tide of advancement of the middle class in the newly emerged industrial based society, as discussed elsewhere in this chapter, and there appeared a certain movement toward the standardisation of people's attitude and social behaviour which was particularly concerned with correctness (cf. also Görlach 1999, 2001). This seems to mean that the new society emerged as a result of industrialization, accompanied by its own sense of values, one of which was the concept of 'standard' behaviour - and the doctrine of correct language was involved in this 'standard'. In such circumstances, the conceptualisation which equates standard with correctness also involved notions, such as gentle and ideal behaviour and speech, which were related to politeness (Wildeblood and Brinson 1965, cf. section 1.3 above). When such polite concepts are applied to the analysis of linguistic phenomena, it seems that the modal auxiliary verb in English is often counted as one of the linguistic means used to mark a polite expression (e.g. Görlach 2001: 123-124), and it is the analysis of this linguistic form in grammar and usage books of the period which forms the data for discussion in this thesis.

Most theoretical research which deals with the relationship between politeness and language is concerned with Present-Day English (e.g. Brown and Levinson 1987, Leech 1983, Fraser 1990). But there are many studies which view the issue of linguistic politeness from a historical perspective. (e.g. Klein 1983, 1986, 1989 1994a, b; Morgan 1994; Wildeblood and Brinson (1965) to name but a few). Such investigations form part of a wider study of historical (i.e. diachronic) pragmatics (e.g. Traugott 1989, 2004, Jacobs and Jucker 1995). Such research suggests that our interpretation of language in context dynamically develops the (interpretational or conceptual) linkages between concepts. More specifically, the concept of politeness is influenced by social and cultural factors (cf. Brown and Levinson 1987, Ide 1989, Matsumoto 1988, Mao 1994, Gui 1990, and section 1.3.1 above, where I distinguish between universal and variable politeness). What this suggests is that there could also be differences in the linguistic marking of politeness depending on geographical areas and social custom. Furthermore, even within a domain of a single country or language, it can be estimated that the conceptualisation of politeness changes, as far as regional, cultural varieties exist.

In other words, linguistic politeness is universal, though its specific manifestations might be different in different periods, and that overt comment on polite language may be specific to particular cultures at particular times. In this situation, it seems that there is a need to distinguish between linguistic politeness, and other kinds of polite behaviour. The concept of politeness extends over a variety of matters. For example, as discussed in section 1.1.3, one social concept which was associated with politeness in the Late Modern English period is gender. Beal (2004: 104) suggests, for example, a social tendency which connected women to certain standards of correct behaviour as a result of their increased access to education (see section 1.1.4 above). It is said that politeness, education and correctness were often linked to each other at that time (Watts 2002). Books which were written to introduce women to appropriate, 'ladylike' behaviour are not difficult to find (e.g. Chapone 1774, Vandenhoff 1862, Bell 1885); and issues about the feminine way of pronunciation, which was often regarded as polite, can frequently be discovered in these books (Mugglestone 1995). Such material seems to reflect a strong connection between politeness and women, and is certainly one of the issues of politeness which emerged in the Late Modern English period. As we have seen, as part of the standardisation of English as a language in the Late Modern period, the doctrine of prescriptivism, and notions of 'correct' grammar and usage, flourished. How people view politeness and correctness varies depending on societies and times (e.g. Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg 1995, Kopytko 1995, Watts 2002, Klein 1993), so it is also likely that there will be differences regarding the conceptualisation of politeness in English diachronically (cf. e.g. Watts 2002, Millar 2002). This raises the interesting question of how we model diachronic changes in the marking of politeness.

My research specifically concerns the emergence of overt discussions of modal verbs as polite markers in the history of English, by examining the analysis of modals in grammar and usage books of the period. The next section is concerned with evaluating those books as evidence for historical pragmatics.

### 1.4.2 Grammar and usage and manner books as evidence

The texts from which the primary data for this thesis is taken form a corpus of randomly collected grammar books written in the Late Modern English period. In addition, some usage and manner books published during the same period are also referred to as supplementary evidence. Based on these materials, this research looks at how the modal auxiliary verb is analysed both in terms of form and meaning/use.

Why does this research choose a corpus of grammar books as the primary resource? Normally it is expected that a corpus which records actual use is adopted with this type of study. For example, with regard to the study of historical pragmatics, Jucker (1994: 535) argues that written records which approximate most closely to spoken language and corpora of letter writing are useful. On the other hand, he says “literary language is usually shunned by pragmatics” (Jucker 1994: 535). When this perspective is adopted, using a grammar book as a resource for pragmatic research may be seen to be an improper choice and arguments based on such data not so persuasive. Nevertheless, there is a reason why such written data are adopted for the present research. In most cases, historical pragmatic study proceeds by trying to seek and reflect the real situation in which people actually use language. However, in my research, I attempt to discover more about how and when overt commentary on the correct and polite use of the modals emerges. Here we can see a contrast between the two aims, and hence, the motivation for a different methodology. The former takes resources which approximate most closely to natural speech; the latter tries to find particular resources which make observations (or pass judgment) on such natural (and at times, planned) speech (and writing). In this respect, the grammar, usage and manner books are useful resources to refer to; and the emergence of the grammar book during the Late Modern English period (Michael 1970) illustrates the rise of the doctrine of correctness most clearly. The many publications and their reprints obviously suggest that there was a high demand and use of such texts, in a particular part of English society.

1.4.3 The corpus

The corpus I analysed is composed of 48 randomly collected grammar books, distributed chronologically as shown in Table 1.1.

**Table 1.1      Distribution of grammars per period**

Date of publication	1700-1740	1741-1780	1781-1820	1821-1860	1861-1900
Number of texts	2	12	16	12	6

As a result, the overall distribution of texts across the period has a peak at around 1800. Since the references were collected randomly, the credibility or validity of such a distribution can be questioned: does the constitution of the corpus accurately reflect the real situation in terms of the known publication of grammar books as a whole? According to Michael (1987, 1997) who carried out a more elaborate study regarding the publication of English grammar books diachronically, the peak of the number of publications occurs at around the middle of the nineteenth century. We can see that the peak in my corpus predates that of Michael’s corpus slightly, but I regard the gap as within a permissible range. There are two reasons to support this opinion. First, when the period of publication of texts in my corpus is divided into two (i.e. those published in the eighteenth century, and those in the nineteenth century), the split is 22:26 respectively. This is analogous to Michael’s data. The point is that there is a continuous increase in the publication in the eighteenth century and a decrease toward the end of the nineteenth century. So, although the gap between the peaks of my and Michael’s corpora may give the impression of a significant difference, the overall trend is quite similar. Second, the present study does not really require minute observation of the differences between the early and mid-nineteenth century. This can be understood when we confirm the rather similar descriptions of mood and the modal auxiliary verb among the grammar

books throughout the later part of the Late Modern English period (though this does change toward the end of the nineteenth century in some cases).

There seems to have been certain potential demand for the grammar book whose descriptions were customized to match the need at that time. Gough (1754: iv-v) emphasises the importance of the need for practical grammar books which are easy to understand for the use of the young in school education. Another issue – the attempt to deviate from the conventional ‘classical language’-based education of grammar – also encouraged the popular demand for the new grammar book of English (e.g. Ash 1763: iv). This situation seems to show the important and influential position of the grammar book in Late Modern English society.

While there were several manner books which discuss particular aspects of women’s polite behaviour, we can see that most of the grammar books had as their target the young, students who were seen to need to learn the proper forms of language; in other words, the grammar books were published for educational purposes (cf. section 1.1.4 above). Such an indication can sometimes be found as a part of the subtitle of the text itself. For example, the title of Cobbett’s (1823) grammar is as follows:

- (34) *A Grammar of the English Language in a series of letters.  
Intended for the Use of Schools and of Young Persons in  
general; but more especially for the Use of Soldiers,  
Sailors, Apprentices, and Plough-boys*

(Cobbett 1823)

More simplified indications like the following were also common.

- (35) *A Grammar of Rhetoric and Polite Literature (for the use of  
schools, or private instruction)*

(Jamieson 1818)

- (36) A New System of English Grammar (for the use of schools, and private teaching)

(Angus 1812)

Whatever the descriptions are, their aim is largely the same. Consequently, the grammar book was representative of the period, developing not only the independent 'English' grammatical tradition, but also reflecting a social trend – the demand for learning the standard language. Therefore, such texts provide good research material for the examination of the prescriptive use of the modal auxiliary verb.<sup>5</sup>

In these respects, it is clear that a corpus such as that which is adopted in this research is both rational and novel, to the extent that it provides an alternative set of data for looking at how and when the modals were overtly commented on as politeness markers in English. I also hope that this study can show another further aspect of sociolinguistic research making good use of the historical perspective.

#### 1.4.4 Classification and categorisation of texts

I use the term 'text(s)' here to represent the grammar, usage and manner books: all of them play a certain role, which provides and guides readers with regard to proper usage, or language which is supposed to be officially 'correct'. I use the word 'officially' because most of the writers were in authoritative positions in society so that, it is estimated that the products gained prestige. It does not seem to be a problem to regard these as textbooks, collectively. However, there can be some problems in terms of the differentiation between grammar, usage and manner books. My motivations and justification for such a categorisation are explained in the following sections.

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<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the Late Modern English period coincides with the time of more widespread activities beyond national borders especially with regard to commerce. This social trend provided opportunities for more people to be in contact with English speakers, both as a native speaker and as a learner of English as a second or other language. In fact, there is a grammar book which was written for English, German, French and Italian students all together (Anon 1841). To learn English was increasingly very important politically and commercially.



#### 1.4.4.1 The Grammar book

Priestley (1762: 4) suggests that grammar is the system of rules which underlies language use. This can quite obviously be said to characterise all languages, regarding 'language' as a common or rather genetic human feature. Yet other Late Modern English grammarians emphasised specific features associated with individual languages. As Webster argues, "the grammar of one language would not answer for another" (Webster 1784: 3). In terms of this particular aspect of grammar, it was also pointed out that there are certain rules which systematically organise individual languages, rules which were deemed useful for students to learn and memorise (Gough 1754: v). Since another grammarian indicated that he tried to compile such rules to make a guide to usage for proper writing and speaking (Fell 1784: xii, 1), it may be estimated that in many cases the grammar book was regarded as a text which aimed to provide people with model information, and which condensed features of the language in order for students to understand the mechanism of the language for purposes of better writing and speaking.

Having analysed the corpus of grammars described in section 1.4.3 above, I noticed that it is possible to recognise that there were certain common patterns across grammar books in the Late Modern English period. Such texts typically have contents or chapters regarding parts of speech such as verb, adverb, adjective, etc. and other issues concerned with phrasal syntax. This seems to be because of the easy, straightforward adoption of the format of the grammar book of the classic languages: the format is based largely on a prescriptive ideology. Through this adoption, a certain subjective idea must have influenced aspects of the description of the English grammar book, since how to write and compose the grammar book depended after all on the author's own intentions. The description is typically illustrated with examples from model writers which the author regarded as proper and instructive to the learners, the main target readers. As noted in section 1.4.3, the total number of grammar books in this corpus of Late Modern English was 48.



#### 1.4.4.2 Usage book

My original idea in terms of the usage book was to collect a corpus of texts which introduced some examples of socially 'proper' uses of certain words and phrases. While the style of the grammar book is typically a list of particular forms with fewer illustrative sentences, the description of the usage book is more illustrative, with many example sentences. For example, one of the descriptions of Hodgson's *Errors in the Use of English* is the following.

- (37) *Were* he still disposed to go there my purse *shall* be open to him. – GALT's Entail, vol.iii. p.106. [For 'were he' read 'if he is'; or 'shall' must be changed to 'would.']

(Hodgson 1889: 94)

As we can see, the text includes both 'wrong' and 'proper' usages. In a sense, this kind of tract might be called the 'error book'. Why it is good to refer to the usage book is that it is possible to see more clearly an indication of the connection between politeness and the modal auxiliary verb, although it is not so often that such a description emerges. Such an indication of the error / proper use of a polite expression seems more frequently to be adopted in books which mainly treated issues of pronunciation rather than grammar. Since overt comment on phonological variants emerged during the Late Modern period, books which dealt with 'good' and 'bad' pronunciation were quite common, such as *Errors of Pronunciation, and Improper Expressions, used frequently, and chiefly by the Inhabitants of London* (Anon 1817), *Errors in Speaking and Writing Corrected; A few words on Letters H and R; with Familiar Synonymes, and Words of similar Sound Distinguished* (Anon 1855), and *Poor Letter H* (Henry 1854), as noted in section 1.2.1 above. It is possible to notice that certain connections between right / proper (use) and politeness were frequently mentioned in such texts; this becomes even clearer when the manner book is considered as a resource for discovering information about nineteenth century society. Hodgson's book treats the issues of errors and use quite extensively,

based around four areas of language: vocabulary, accident, syntax and rhetoric.

On the other hand, there is another kind of text which focuses more on specific issues, and even specific words or sounds. An anonymous author (1813) wrote a book titled *Observation on The Use of the Words Shall and Will; chiefly Designed For Foreigners and Persons Educated at a Distance From the Metropolis, and also For The Use of Schools*. This book provides enumeration of the rules with regard to how to use *will* and *shall* with examples which correspond to the application of the rules. Some of the examples of the rules in terms of *will* which are described in the book are cited below.

- (38) Rule 1. To express choice, readiness, will, and pleasure, we generally use will.

(Anon 1813: 9)

- (39) Rule 2. In circumstances of ardent volition, we always use will.

Rule 3. In expressing strong or violent resolution, we employ will.

(Anon 1813: 11)

- (40) Rule 4. To give additional expression of volition, alacrity or resolution, we sometimes place the pronoun after will, and words for limitation before it.

(Anon 1813: 13)

In contrast to the general type of guide to usage which is exemplified by the Hodgson text, this text deals with the use of *will* and *shall* specifically and restrictedly, and it is possible to see the detailed descriptions regarding their use. Such elaborated information is ideal for research on a specific kind of institutionalised or prescribed polite usage, so books of this kind were included as a second category of text in this thesis. Other texts which fall into this category include *Remarks on the Incidental Ambiguities and False Imports, attendant on the use of the Auxiliary Signs in the English Language, with Hints For Detecting And*

*Avoiding Them* (Anon 1814) and *English Prose Its Elements, History, and Usage* (Earle 1890). The first of these quite restrictedly focuses on the issue of the auxiliary verb, and as such, the text is highly useful for this research. 7 such texts which fall into the category of usage book have been referred to in this thesis. But as in the case of the grammar book, there are others which were consulted but not counted since the contents were marginal to the main study (e.g. *A Pronouncing and Spelling Dictionary* written by William Johnston in 1764) or were published too early: for example, *The English Gentleman* (Brathwait 1630) is very much like a usage book in the Late Modern English period in tone.

#### 1.4.4.3 Manner book

By the phrase ‘manner book’, what I mean is a category of texts which provide useful information for (possessing) ‘better’ attitude and behaviour, including dress and deportment/carriage etc. This is because, as this thesis will argue, during the period of Late Modern English a special kind of learned, culturally specific ‘politeness’ was regarded as one of the characteristics of a part of society at the time. For instance, Chapone (1774: 94) writes of the importance of the connection between politeness and behaviour and attitude in her *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind* as in the following citation.

- (41) Politeness of behaviour, and the attainment of such branches of knowledge and such arts and accomplishments as are proper to your sex, capacity, and station, will prove so valuable to yourself through life, and will make you so desirable a companion, that the neglect of them may reasonably be deemed a neglect of duty; since it is undoubtedly our duty to cultivate the powers entrusted to us, and to render ourselves as perfect as we can.

(Chapone 1774: 94)

That is why we can see many words or concepts which link to politeness, such as gentle, elegant, modest, proper, etc., in books whose subject are attitude and behaviour. In short, such information can be regarded broadly as the issue of manner.

I have made use of 25 texts which can be thought of as manner books in the Late Modern English period. At first glance, it may seem that the manner book does not need to be taken up as a reference. This is because the manner book rarely treats language as a concrete means of marking 'politeness of behaviour', providing no specific words, phrases and sentences in particular as examples of (good) manners. Nevertheless, even though linguistic forms are rarely directly cited, there are descriptions which indirectly suggest the connection between language and politeness as a matter of manners. For example, Vandenhoff (1862: iii) discusses the "elegance and force of language". He further describes that "grace of speech is particularly attractive in woman" and "the speaking of her native language with purity and elegance of pronunciation, in an agreeable tone of voice, with a speaking accentuation and an easy, fluent, utterance are distinguishing marks of a good education, and carry with them the 'prestige' of refinement and high breeding" (Vandenhoff 1862: v). The latter sentence seems particularly to tell of the importance of 'good language' as a critical factor for a successful life in a particular part of society in the period. A discussion of phonological forms may be noticed as more frequent than a discussion of lexical or grammatical variants, but some evidence may still be found which is relevant to a discussion of modal verbs.

It is necessary for me to admit that there was some uncertainty with regard to the categorization of the books into these three subgroups. But this seems to be unavoidable given the fact that so many of the texts are concerned with establishing 'standard' or 'proper' forms of English, and establishing what forms should not be used. In spite of this difficulty, again, I assume that there is no serious problem with the categorization I have adopted. As already suggested, it is possible to recognise certain patterns of description within each of the categories. Even if there might be some overlap between the categories, this thesis has used the categories as a rough guide to the kinds of texts available to a particular part of society. It can be estimated that if more elaborated details and distinctions are required, they should be

considered in further work. (Later in this thesis, rather for the sake of convenience, a sub-categorisation of the manner book is attempted in chapter 3, section 3.1.2.1; and the descriptions of the grammar, usage and manner books are discussed further in chapter 4, section 4.3.)

Overall, in terms of all the texts which are examined in this thesis, it is very hard to find a description which simply states that, for example, '*may* is used in polite speech' or '*should* is a word to express politeness'. I assume that this suggests the fact that the modals have more than one function, and are not simply politeness markers. Instead, it is possible to find discussions of modality where the modal auxiliary verbs are explained as an expression to mean or convey speakers' modest feeling, gentle taste, and the like in the grammar book or the usage book. Then on the other hand, we can see that senses such as 'modest', 'gentle', 'elegant', etc. were regarded as the equivalent to or the representatives of the concepts of properness and politeness in the manner book and the books of social decorum during the Late Modern English period. As a result, it is fairly obvious that the modal auxiliary verb and politeness are connected to each other through a series of related concepts. Just a single type of resource – i.e. just the grammar book, or just the manner book – does not seem to be enough to explain the growth of overt commentary on the relationship between the modals and politeness in Late Modern English. However, a broad perspective, examining a combination of the different kinds of texts introduced above, makes the connection clearer. Moreover, a network-based analysis of the relationship between form, meaning and use, contributes to our understanding of how the sense of politeness is associated with linguistic forms in our mind.

## 1.5 Summary of chapter 1

In this chapter, I have argued that a newly emerging society was to bring about new social structure. One of the outcomes was an increase in contact between different social groups, as a result of increased social mobility. In that situation people were in need of better education in language, where evaluation of speech

affected their social success or position: the concept of standard came to the fore as a model to meet a particular demand or otherwise to serve the language users' purpose. Whether it was people's demand for a certain guide or the authors' aim in notifying the public of what 'proper language' should be, the culture encouraged the publication of 'model' grammar books. In such texts, it is possible to notice that several idealized concepts or senses were indicated, including 'polite usage'. There are two aspects in this concept of politeness: one of them is a broader, more basic, general idea as 'consideration for others'. The other is more 'managed' or institutionalized, and characterises the Late Modern period.

## **Chapter 2. The treatment of mood and modality in late Modern English grammar books and usage manuals**

While chapter 1 dealt largely with the issue of eighteenth and nineteenth century society and the related sociolinguistic phenomena, this chapter moves on to the more specific linguistic issues of mood and modality, and how these are represented in Late Modern English grammars. Section 1 discusses the nature and purpose of the grammar book in Late Modern period. The motivation for the emergence of the grammar book is explained in detail. Section 2 describes how the grammar books treated that part of the verbal grammatical system which includes the modal auxiliary verb (the linguistic focus of this research). Section 3 explores the issues of mood and modality, both of which the modal auxiliary verb is related to, and how these are addressed in grammar books of the period. Section 4 looks at the nature of the Late Modern English grammarians' classification of the auxiliary verb more generally. Section 5 is concerned with analyses of semantics and pragmatics. The overall aim for this chapter is to point out the particular features of, and the manner of description of, the modal auxiliary verb in grammar books of the Late Modern English period.

### **2.1 The nature and purpose of the grammar book**

In certain ways, many of the grammar books in the eighteenth century appear to have a very similar structure, and a similar set of purposes. Four elements of language typically appeared in the Late Modern English grammar book: orthography, etymology, syntax and prosody, many of which were described with an underlying, fundamental theme of propriety. Gough (1754: iii-iv) says in the preface of his grammar book.



- (1) There affords not sufficient Instruction to Learners to avoid the Solecisms, which ungrammatical Writers are apt to exhibit, and which it is proper to guard them against.
- These Grammars seem to be little more than an Extract of the English Part of the Latin Grammar, which Method of compiling an English Grammar we esteem quite improper, because the Genius's of the two languages are widely different.

(Gough 1754: iii-iv)

Here Gough indicates that there had not been enough proper information to prevent the proliferation of “ungrammatical” expressions among students. (Note that he goes on to say that he regards Latin-based grammars, the dominant trend at that time, as also improper, implying the necessity of the introduction of one based purely on English: I return to this issue below.) The same sentiment regarding the need for a certain propriety in grammar is expressed by Fell:

- (2) English Grammar is the Art of Speaking and Writing the English Language, agreeably to the established usage of the best and most approved Speakers and Writers.

(Fell 1784: 1)

Such a focus on propriety seems to link to the normative tradition characteristic of such texts in the period.

Nevertheless, once we look at the contents closely and carefully, distinguishing characteristics of many of the books can be found. Such differentiation makes us aware of the existence of varieties within the grammar book. Some authors conceptualize that ‘grammar’ has a certain flexibility to express or represent people’s thoughts, ideas and intentions. Campbell (1776) argues that there are two aspects regarding any linguistic expression: one is logical rhetoric and the other is grammatical expression (Campbell 1776: 33). Campbell compares rhetoric

and grammar to humans' soul and body respectively (Campbell 1776: 32). The rhetorical aspect represents sense or thought while the grammar represents its formal expression. The book also provides a discussion of eloquence and language ideology. Such views are echoed by Herries (1773), who explains in his *The Element of Speech*: "Of all the facilities which belong to the human nature, there is none more admirable or excellent, than the power of Speech" (Herries 1773: 1). Priestley (1761) is also an author who contrasts the strictness of the grammatical system with the flexibility of utterances. Priestley says that "the meaning and force of English words" are based not only on their 'inflections' but also on the circumstances in which they are used (1761: v). He compares "the grammar of language" with "the grammar of nature" (1761: vi). What he seems to mean by this is that grammar is a part of nature; therefore, there is a kind of natural principle whereby the more fixed system and its more fluid use co-exist.

Several grammars of the period dealt with classic languages such as Latin and Greek in conjunction with English, or were written from the point of view of universal characteristics of language (though as the quotation from Fell above makes clear, not all grammarians approved of the first of these). A typical example of a grammar book which deals with cross-linguistic features is *An Introduction to Languages, Literary and Philosophical* by Anselm Bayly (1758). In this book Bayly divides grammar into two parts: literary and philosophical. He describes the grammars of four languages: English, Latin, Greek and Hebrew. In his preface, he outlines the objectives of his text: "In short, here is an attempt to give a rational and universal view of language from its elements through the several combinations and powers in writing and speaking" (Bayly 1758: *Preface*, 2). The same objectives characterised his later work, *A Plain and Complete Grammar with the English Accidence* (1772):

- (3) The author therefore of the present attempt to write a universal grammar, may justly claim the candor of the learned.

(Bayly 1772: vi)

- (4) The importance of grammar is seen, if from no other argument, from the multiplicity of grammars, that have been written in all languages.

(Bayly 1772: vii)

Baker's *Reflections on the English Language* (1770) also uses cross-linguistic comparisons to illustrate grammatical features, but the language chosen for comparison is not classical Latin or Greek, but rather French. Baker had been influenced by his reading Vaugelas's *Reflections on the French* and his personal attitude towards France and the French made him write the English book based on the French book. The similarity between the two titles also shows Baker's strong attachment to French. But while we can see that personal thoughts had a role to play in his decision to publish a grammar book at that time, it is also possible to recognise that the existence of (established grammars of) some other European languages was taken as an impetus to write English grammars. Moreover, Pickbourn, in his 1789 book on the English verb takes up both Latin and French as objects of comparison. As a possible reason for this, he says that "the Latin appeared the most important of the ancient languages, and the French the most important of the modern ones" (Pickbourn 1789: xviii).

Finally, the educational aspect of grammar production was made clear in, for example, Buchanan's *The British Grammar*, published in 1762. In the preface of his book, Buchanan stresses the importance of learning the grammar of one's own language. He notes comparisons between British education and that of another European country. It is possible to see the importance of teaching their contemporary language (grammar):

- (5) Speaking of the Education of Greece, whose Youth were taught to write their own Language more accurately than we are Latin and Greek

(Buchanan 1762: xviii)

Buchanan does not say that the knowledge of other languages is not important. Rather, the priority is to know more about the language which people use currently and which therefore is more practically useful than classical or other modern foreign languages. In other words, the logic of the remark on the Greek case above also seems to imply that learning their own language itself (even including its historical aspect) should be enough (since their civilization can also be learned), but that this is not true of the other languages, let alone the classical varieties of them. The subtitle of his book is 'For The Use of the Schools of Great Britain and Ireland, and of Private Young Gentlemen and Ladies.' Similar examples of texts whose purpose is for school education are numerous. Works written by Gough (1754) and Ash (1763) are examples of this kind, as well as *A Course of Lectures on the Theory of Language and Universal Grammar* (Priestley 1762) and *A Course of Lectures on Elocution* (Sheridan 1762) (which is more concerned with pronunciation than with grammar). This situation can also be seen in the nineteenth century, in texts by Walker (1805), Cobbett (1823) and Ballantyne (1847).

Grammars for different varieties of English were also emerging. Noah Webster is a typical author who connects language with national identity:

- (6) The author wishes to promote the honour and prosperity of the confederated republics of America; and cheerfully throws his mite into the common treasure of patriotic exertions.

(Webster 1783: 14)

Like Buchanan in Britain, Webster also targeted students to define their 'English' more solidly as the one used and established in the United States:

- (7) The design of this Part of the Institute, is to frame a Grammar of our own language upon its true principles, and calculate it for the benefit of common English schools.

(Webster 1784: preface)

I have provided a general discussion of some of the motivations surrounding grammar production in the period. I now turn to a specific issue of grammatical description, a subcategory of which will form the basis of the remainder of the thesis – this is the matter of the analysis of the verb. I have already suggested that there were grammar books which specialized in the matter of verbal syntax and morphology. Besides these specialized books, many authors of English grammar book naturally took verbal syntax as a central topic among others discussed.

**2.2 The treatment of aspects of verbal morphology in grammar books: an overview of tense and modality**

What is common to many grammars of the period is the basic description of inflectional categories. This is especially true of the description of mood and tense. Most of the paradigms or conjugations are firstly divided by moods, and secondly by tenses. An example of the description is given below.

(8)

To HAVE		
Indicative Mood		
Present tense		
	singular	plural
First Person	I have.	We have.
Second Person	Thou hast.	Ye/You have.
Third Person	He/She/It hath/has.	They have.
Preterimperfect tense		
	singular	plural
First Person	I had.	We had.
Second Person	Thou hast.	Ye/You had.
Third Person	He/She/It had.	They had.

Preterperfect tense		
	singular	plural
First Person	I have had.	We have had.
Second Person	Thou hast had.	Ye/You have had.
Third Person	He/She/It has had.	They have had.
Preterpluperfect tense		
	singular	plural
First Person	I had had.	We had had.
Second Person	Thou hadst had.	Ye/You had had.
Third Person	He/She/It had had.	They had had.
First Future Tense		
	singular	plural
First Person	I shall/will have.	We shall/will have.
Second Person	Thou shalt/wilt have.	Ye/You shall/will have.
Third Person	He/She/It shall/will have.	They shall/will have.
Second Future Tense		
	singular	plural
First Person	I shall/will have had.	We shall/will have had.
Second Person.	Thou shalt/wilt have had.	Ye/You shall/will have had.
Third Person	He/She/It shall/will have had.	They shall/will have had.

(extracted from Murray 1795: 45-46)

Despite this common practice with respect to basic terms within the morphological categories, there were also significant differences in the detailed discussions of mood and tense. For instance, there are several different names and categories of moods, as observed by Michael (1970: 424-439), who provides a detailed analysis of aspects of the categorization of verbal mood by early grammarians in the period between 1586 and 1801. He notes that he found 14 different categorizations of which 6 differentiated traditional moods (Indicative, Imperative, Infinitive, Optative, Potential, Subjunctive) and 8 provided some new categories. The number of

grammars which have such a classification in his corpus is 204. Furthermore, there are another 19 grammars which explicitly deny the existence of moods or a mood system in English and 35 which do not refer to moods. In fact, Michael implies that each of the grammars includes even more details, but for convenience's sake he simplified the categories:

- (9) In fact the response was even more varied and uncertain than the table shows, but it would be tedious to document all the qualifications and doubts with which the systems are proposed.

(Michael 1970: 434)

So, while the categorizations are modified, Michael still shows that 'the grammarians did use their freedom' to propose their own ideas towards the categories and classifications. The varied classifications of moods discussed by Michael (1970: 433-4) are detailed in Appendix 1. For example, grammarians who posit the smallest number of categories have just one of two combinations of two moods: Indicative and Imperative or Indicative and Subjunctive; by contrast, another grammar suggests English is composed of six moods: Indicative, Imperative, Infinitive, Optative, Potential and Subjunctive. This kind of differentiated situation varying by author can also be confirmed by looking at the data in appendix 2. Appendix 2 shows how authors of the grammar books in my corpus distinguish or categorise mood or mode, including which name (mood or mode) the authors adopted. The data from the corpus indicate that there are: four major moods, Indicative, Imperative, Subjunctive and Infinitive; one slightly less frequently classified mood (which is nonetheless noted by more than half of the authors), the Potential; and numerous other minor moods such as Optative. This table suggests that there is a certain agreement among the grammarians on mood and its categorisation; but at the same time we can see some subjective arbitrariness between the authors in detailed parts of the grammars. The fact that just over half of the authors explicitly categorise the Potential mood is noteworthy. It seems to suggest that the linguistic characteristics of this mood can be



problematic to categorise, perhaps because the senses which are involved there are associated with the pragmatics of politeness. This issue is addressed in detail in section 2.3 of this chapter below.

While a certain commonality or similarity between the issues which are discussed under the headings of mood and modality can be noticed (e.g. subjunctive / potential (mood) and (modal) possibility), with examples using the same modal auxiliary verbs, such as *may*, *would*, *should*, etc., it is also possible to recognise certain senses which can be associated with what are traditionally categorised as different tenses. For example, with futurity, it is especially clearly indicated that the present forms of the modal auxiliary verbs *will* and *shall* themselves give out or produce the sense of futurity which can be connected to other (modal) senses.

Some terms within the category of tense are commonly used in the grammars, such as present, preterimperfect, preterperfect, preterpluperfect, first future, and second future tenses (Murray 1795). Not all grammarians agreed on the labels to be used for each of the terms within this morphological category<sup>6</sup>. More importantly, several different opinions relating to the applicability of such terms to the grammar of English were voiced in the late Modern period. White (1761: 49) argues for one present, three past and four future tenses, thus adopting eight tenses in total. What makes his classification peculiar is that he regards *shall* and *will* as different tenses: the First Future: *shall*, the Second Future: *will*, the Third Future: *shall have* and the Fourth Future: *will have*. Although White shares with most of the other grammarians the idea of the meanings or implications which *shall* and *will* have, he seems to see enough differences between the two words to divide them into separate tenses. Marsh (1860) denies the existence of the future tense. He claims that “the future is a compound” which consists of “a present auxiliary and an aorist<sup>7</sup> infinitive” (1860: 300). Cobbett (1833: 49) by contrast argues that there are three tenses: present, past, and future with regard to the form of the verb.

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<sup>6</sup> For instance, Walker (1805: 29), has the same six categories, but changes the names of the last two: the foretelling future imperfect / the commanding future imperfect and the future perfect tense. Brown (1851: 326) also adopts six categories, but, names the imperfect, the perfect and the pluperfect as the preterimperfect, the preterperfect and the preterpluperfect respectively.

<sup>7</sup> (indefinite) past

Although such attempts at the adoption of a clear-cut attitude on grammar were quite common, there were nonetheless some uncertainties on the part of some authors regarding how to decide which forms were the correct ones. Such a situation can typically be identified in the issue of uses between two modal auxiliary verbs *will* and *shall*. Leonard (1929: 83-84) describes Murray's quandary over the distinction between *shall* and *will* as an issue of tense. Actually, although most of the authors discuss the uses and meanings of *will* and *shall* (also *would* and *should*), several admit that it is difficult to distinguish clearly and completely between the two in terms of the distinctions of use and nuances of meaning. Harrison (1848: 256-257) shows hesitation towards establishing the clearly distinguished uses between the two modal auxiliary verbs. While he suggests that the two auxiliaries "in certain portions, are very different", he notes supplementary descriptions pointing out the regional varieties: "they are frequently used the one for the other", yet a "well-educated Englishman, however, seldom makes a mistake in the application of *shall* and *will*, though it may sometimes be necessary to feel the way, as it were, by a delicate touch" (1848: 256-257). As for the description written by Sedger (1798: 48-49), he hedges, by using words 'seems to' to introduce the distinction which give us some impression of uncertainty:

(10) *Shall* seems to assign power or choice entirely to the first person

*Will* seems to assign power intirely to the first person and knowledge in respect to the other two

(Sedger 1798: 48-49)

The reality which includes the more differentiated details which are involved can be confirmed by looking at the table in appendix 2. The findings here concur with Michael (1970): while it seems possible to simplify the patterns of the mood systems to certain limited numbers, nevertheless, each grammarian has his own view which does not overlap with the others', strictly speaking. Each grammarian provides his model as the correct one for the learners to refer to.

For instance, on the issue of the subjunctive mood, Harrison (1848: 279-280) suggested that authors just insisted on their own principles without recognizing they might be wrong. Latham (1841: 273) argues that the only ‘worthy’ subjunctive forms in English are *were* and *wert* instead of the *was* and *wast* of the indicative, which seems to throw into doubt the view that the subjunctive mood was a productive morphological category in English. Cramp (1838) also seems to share such a perspective; and similarly, Earle (1898) notes:

- (11) To know what is and what is not Subjunctive Mood, is not always quite so easy... [in the subjunctive mood: HO] there is something in the external form of the verb which could not have place in the Indicative Mood, viz. ‘he bring, Simon were.’ But the Auxiliaries which are used to make the phrasal Subjunctive have sometimes one form for Indicative and Subjunctive, as in certain uses of *may*, *should*, *would*, and *had*
- (Earle 1898: 130)

We can see that Earle suggests variation in the expression of the category of mood – sometimes inflectional, sometimes periphrastic. Indeed, later in the book he argues “The Subjunctive Mood, as a distinct flexional form, is passing away” (1898: 132). This paradox had already been noticed earlier. Fell (1784: 25) observed what kind of implications are conveyed (possibility, liberty, contingency, conditionality) by the use of the potential (= subjunctive; he regards the subjunctive in the same light as the potential) and what corresponding verbs are adopted. As a result, Fell found that there were two patterns of verbal form confirmed: “pure” (the original forms) and “circumscribed”<sup>8</sup> (periphrastic: the modal auxiliary verbs + the original forms) in the expression of the subjoined clause. Fell (1784: 25) concluded that it was better to call the mood ‘potential’ rather than subjunctive.

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<sup>8</sup> Fell (1784: 25) introduces ‘pure’ and ‘circumscribed’ referring to the earlier grammarians’ distinction regarding the Potential mood. ‘Pure’ means predominantly lexical verbs, while ‘circumscribed’ means the verbs used “when possibility, duty, obligation, and circumstances, were expressed by ‘may’, ‘can’, ‘might’, ‘would’, ‘could’, and ‘should’, with an infinitive mode after them”.

- (12) The subjunctive mode is that form of the verb which is subjoined to the indicative mode, and sometimes to the imperative. As this mode, in its very nature, implies possibility, liberty, contingency, or imports something conditional, or refer to an end that may be obtained, it would be better to call it the potential mode

(Fell 1784: 25)

Priestley also notes the demise of the English mood system:

- (13) The English admit none of them [modes or moods: HO], but have recourse to other methods of expressing those circumstances of an affirmation, without giving a different modification to the verb.

(Priestley 1762: 98)

Such an opinion was shared by other authors in the eighteenth century such as Greenwood (1711), Gough (1754) and Webster (1789).

The situation described above suggests that Late Modern English grammarians considered the issue of modality to involve a variety of factors which reflected the state of human mind. This seems to directly connect to their view that the fundamental purpose of mood is to mark the conceptualizer's attitude towards the proposition (see 2.3.1 below). The variety of categorisations which is proposed by the authors further suggests this. As an example which shows the extent of the domain of modality, we can see that some grammarians categorised tense as a part of modality. As for the conceptualisation of mood and tense, we will see that the part which is related to the potential, optative and subjunctive seems to be associated with pragmatics and politeness.

## 2.3 Definitions of mood and modality

In section 2.3.1, I begin with a discussion of mood in contemporary accounts of English grammar and then introduce views held about mood and mode by authors of grammar books in the Late Modern English period. The details of the mood system in Late Modern English period are also analysed. In section 2.3.2, modality is discussed from the point of view of contemporary researchers, then applied to the data and discussion provided by my corpus of Late Modern English grammars.

### 2.3.1 Mood and mode

Bybee and Fleischman (1995: 2) introduce moods as “formal categories of grammar”, while Lyons (1977: 436, 746) and Huddleston (1984: 80) note that mood is a formal category of verbal inflectional system which represents illocutionary force. More specifically, it is said that such illocutionary force consists of binary systems of factuality – non-factuality, assertions – non-assertions, main clause – subordinate clause (Huddleston 1984: 80), and realis – irrealis associated with the indicative – subjunctive division (Palmer 2001: 4). The second of each of the binary combinations reflect the speaker’s mind more and are therefore represent more grammaticalised, subjectivised phenomena. However, an analysis based on verbal inflections alone has typically not been adopted by present-day grammarians. The reason for this is that the focus of the issue has changed from just inflectional form to more general issues of meaning or signification. The focus is on modality, expressed by modal auxiliary verbs, adjectives, adverbs, etc., not just inflectional mood. In the Late Modern English period, the descriptive emphasis was quite different.

In his discussion of English grammar, Harrison (1848: 245) says that “Moods representing the condition, or affections, of the mind would be as varied and extended as those affections” (1848: 245) and “Modes and moods represent the different feelings of the mind, to which feelings the varied inflexions of the verb are adapted” (1848: 247). ‘Mood’ is a term which was regularly treated as a property of

the verb in grammar books and usage manuals of the period. Another word 'mode' is also applied often for the same meaning and purpose by grammarians (e.g. Davidson 1815: 28, Andrew 1817: 32). On the other hand, in examples such as "mood is a certain mode or manner of being, doing, suffering" (Walker 1805: 100), there are cases which regard mood as a subcategory of "mode" (e.g. Meilan 1803: 64, Angus 1812: 62). Therefore, there are three ways in which the terms 'mood' and 'mode' are used by grammarians in LModE: (1) for some grammarians, 'mood' and 'mode' are interchangeable, and refer to the same thing; (2) some grammarians consider 'mode' to be a superordinate category, and 'mood' to be a subcategory of 'mode'; and (3) the grounds for either classification is not always made clear by the grammarians of the time.

Irrespective of whether the word used is *mood* or *mode*, however, it is clear that some grammarians considered these categories to be the verb forms which reflect our feeling. As for the matter of this 'feeling', it often reflects the effect of the modal auxiliary verb on our interpretation of the remainder of the clause. That is, the modal auxiliary verb also reflects the speaker's mental perspective and/or their attitude towards the rest of the proposition. It is this subjectivisation – this filtering of a proposition through the mind of the conceptualiser – that is relevant in such cases of grammaticalization. Such an interpretation involves dynamic processes in the connected realms of semantics and pragmatics. Traugott (1989) suggests that this dynamic process involves (a) extension from lexical to textual and from narrow/specific to broad/abstract in both semantic and pragmatic aspects, and (b) another extension from semantic to pragmatic factors. Moreover, since pragmatics involves such factors as practical communication which always requires us to take the existence of other people into consideration, the expression becomes more interpersonal. This also suggests that another development from the more literal, textual meaning to the more (inter)personalised interpretation is involved. According to Traugott, what is consistent in the historical process of grammaticalization is that the degree of the speaker's subjectivity has tended to be strengthened. Some grammarians in the Late Modern English period shared a similar view in their definitions of mode, such as:



- (14) Mode is the manner by which a verb shows its signification, and therefore, consists of certain forms of a verb, expressing the various intentions of the mind.  
(Smith 1816: 57, emphasis added)
- (15) Mood (from the Lat. *modus*, manner) is that inflexion which a verb undergoes to show the mode or manner in which the action or state denoted by the verb is presented to the mind.  
(Daniel 1893: 67, emphasis added)

This definition seemed to be widespread throughout LModE, especially in the eighteenth century; however, in later years, there appeared another view.

- (16) The modes, which serve to express the subjective relation of the speaker to the predicate in thought and will, ...  
(Maetzner 1874 vol.1:325, emphasis added)
- (17) By the moods of a verb we understand grammatical forms expressing different relations between subject and predicate.  
(Sweet 1900: 105, emphasis added)

Such views from LModE grammarians accord with the analysis provided by Traugott (1989) noted above. The common idea is a subjective attitude towards the proposition. Such a perspective directly relates to the idea of “modality” which emerged in the twentieth century as a grammatical category (e.g. Palmer 1990, 2001; Bybee and Fleischman 1995; Coates 1983; and Gotti 2003).

Many grammarians’ definitions of mood refer to the matter of morphological form. In addition to the descriptions above, authors such as Cramp (1838: 125) and



Brown (1851: 322) also describe mood in this way. Furthermore, there is the fact that the grammars of the classical languages like Latin and Greek which were thought of as the models for English grammars also categorise moods based on the relationship between the inflectional form of the verb and its function (e.g. Cobbett 1833: 50). In this verb-form – based system, the default mood is ‘Indicative’, a morphological subcategory used to denote simple assertions. Each of the other moods is situated and defined as a contrast to the Indicative. In the corpus of grammar books I consulted, five moods are popularly adopted: Indicative, Imperative, Potential, Subjunctive, and Infinitive (appendix 2, also cf. appendix 1 and Michael 1970: 434). In the 42 books which were analysed, the Indicative was identified as an inflectional term within the category mood in 36 books (86 %), the Imperative in 34 (81 %), the Subjunctive in 34 (81 %), the Potential in 23 (55 %), and the Infinitive in 29 (69 %). The reason why the Potential is relatively low may be because it was often conflated with or included in the Subjunctive, as discussed in detail below.

Why should such forms be contrasted with the indicative? The Imperative may be regarded as a command form in contrast to the general assertion of the Indicative, the Potential as non-declarative form in contrast to the declarative assertion of the Indicative, the Subjunctive as a conditional, assumptive form in contrast to the normal assertion of the Indicative, and the Infinitive as the non-finite form in the sense of it being not temporally bound to the ordinal finite assertion of the Indicative (cf. e.g. Priestley 1762: 98-100, Brown 1851: 322, for general discussions of each mood). This, as it were, may also show the situation of the ‘simple affirmation’ (Priestley 1761: 94-5) of the Indicative as default and the others as the expressions whose propositions or predicates are somehow modified and restricted.

Such a mood system described above was supposed to work well for the classical languages, but perhaps worked less well for the inflectional system of LModE: when the situation with English is considered, there appear some incompatibilities.

In English, at least in the LModE period, there are few verbal inflections which can mark each subcategory of mood. This results in the situation where more

categories, or terms within categories, (i.e. subtypes of mood) are marked by fewer items (verb inflections). This syncretism means the inflectional forms are lacking in number or variety to differentiate the categories. This problem is partly resolved by the introduction of periphrastic marking of modal (sub)categories, by means of auxiliary verbs. Although many grammarians show some particular markers of each mood, there is little consistency across the corpus. Some of the auxiliaries appear to mark different moods depending on grammarians: for instance, Davidson (1815: 32) says that *may*, *can*, *must*, *might*, *could*, *would* and *should* are markers of the Potential mood, while Sutcliffe (1815: 51) excludes *must*. In addition, while five moods are frequently identified, there are disagreements among authors regarding the specific categorization involved (cf. Michael 1970: 434). It is obvious that there is no single method to unanimously distinguish the mood categories, and each grammarian seemed to establish the categories on idiosyncratic grounds.

Indeed, as noted in section 2.2 above, Priestley (1762: 100) argued that there is no mood category in English. Any such system would require that we count the (sub)categories almost endlessly, sub-dividing the differences of senses in detail. Obviously, Priestley regards meaning as more important than form, as the number of the verbal inflections is quite limited in English. Gough (1754: 51) also suggests that there is no particular way to distinguish moods which is suitable for the grammar of English. He suggests that only the Infinitive might be justifiable. Greenwood (1711: 118-9) and Pickbourn (1789: 156), furthermore, claim that the various modal categories are increasingly expressed in English via the auxiliary system, not via inflection.

- (18) Grammarians do not agree the number of these moods, not only by reason of the difference there is in 'Languages', some being capable of receiving more or fewer inflexions or endings than others, but also because of the different manners of signifying which may be very much multiply'd:

(Greenwood 1711:118)

- (19) Now in 'English', there are no 'moods', because the 'verb' has no diversity of 'endings', to express its manners of signifying: but does all that by the aid of 'auxiliary' or 'helping verbs' which in the 'Latin', and some other Languages, is done by the diversity of 'terminations' or endings.

(Greenwood 1711:119)

- (20) The English language may be said, I think, without any great impropriety, to have as many modes as it has auxiliary verbs.

(Pickbourn 1789: 156)

From this information, it is easy to see that the grammatical system of English and the traditional distinctions in the mood system are not compatible. In such conditions, we find that the division of labour has moved from verb and inflection to lexical verb and auxiliary verb: assertions in the indicative are expressed mainly by (principal) lexical verbs, while the potential and the subjunctive tend to be expressed by the (modal) auxiliary verbs. It is important to observe that the bare assertions and the modified expressions are quite markedly different. In that case, it seems that the modal auxiliaries can be the key to recognise the expressions which represent various modalities in English.

### **2.3.1.1 Subcategorization of the mood system in LModE grammars**

Let us look at the distinction of the categories more in depth. In spite of the disagreement on the categorizations, grammarians tend to have quite unified definitions for most of the moods. Their descriptions tend to conform in the following broad areas.

Indicative: denotes a simple assertion, declaration, or question

Imperative: denotes a command, entreaty

Subjunctive: denotes uncertainty, a conditional, or a supposition, where the speaker is doubtful

Potential: denotes power, liberty, possibility, necessity

Infinitive: is without any reference to participants, temporally unbounded

Nevertheless, there are relatively more disagreements found in connection with the distinction between Subjunctive and Potential (and to a lesser extent also the Indicative). Webster (1789: 231-2), for instance, indicates that in non-conditional clauses, the distinction between potential and indicative mood is redundant:

- (21) All unconditional declarations, whether of an action, or of a 'right', 'power' or 'necessity' of doing an action, belong to the indicative; and the distinction between the 'indicative' and 'potential' is totally useless.

(Webster 1789: 231)

He argues that the indicative can include those aspects which are regarded as potential by other grammarians. This contrasts with a previous assertion which establishes the potential as a modal subcategory (Webster 1784). Although he does not explain the reason for this change specifically, Webster suggests some difficulty in providing an adequate grammatical description:

- (22) It is astonishing to see how long and how stupidly English grammarians have followed the Latin grammars in their divisions of time and mode; ...

(Webster 1789: 231)

- (23) ..., the usual arrangement of the English verbs and auxiliaries in our grammar is calculated to perplex and mislead a learner; and I have never found a foreigner who could use them with tolerable propriety.

(Webster 1789: 232)

Such disputes have a long history in the English grammatical tradition. Earlier, Harris (1751: 142-3) had denied the existence of the Subjunctive as an English mood, saying that it is included in the meaning of the Potential as syntactically subjoined in an conditional clause beginning with *if*. By the beginning of the twentieth century, Sweet (1900) was discussing the difference between fact and thought rather than the verbal forms in terms of the distinction between the Indicative and the Subjunctive. He does not regard the traditional verbal form distinctions as useful (Sweet 1900: 107-8).

In the English grammatical tradition, there have been many arguments surrounding the validity of the claim that the Potential and the Subjunctive are two separate subcategories of mood in English. Some grammarians argue that the Potential is included as a subcategory of the Subjunctive (e.g. Priestley 1762: 99-100), while Fell (1784: 25) says that the Subjunctive should be called the Potential:

- (24) As this mode, in its very nature, implies possibility, liberty, contingency, or imports something conditional, or refers to an end that may be obtained, it would be much better to call it the potential mode;

(Fell 1784: 25)

By contrast, Harris (1751: 141-3) suggests that when the Potential is subjoined to the verb, it is to be called the Subjunctive. Here, there is no difference regarding the meaning and verb-form between the Potential and the Subjunctive. The basis of this confusion seems to be the co-existence of means of expression of

the Potential (adopting modal auxiliary verbs) and the Subjunctive (adopting 'were', bare forms, and certain modal auxiliaries), while there is also certain similarity of meaning between them. The categories are therefore not clearly distinct. Often the formal and functional features of both overlap to a certain degree. Webster (1789: 231) recommends that all unconditional declaratives should be classified as Indicative, even if certain potentiality is included.

- (25) we often find *may*, *can*, *should*, and *must* in a conditional mode, when they are positive declarations and belong to the indicative.

All unconditional declarations, whether of an action, or of a 'right', 'power' or 'necessity' of doing an action, belong to the 'indicative'; and the distinction between the indicative and potential is totally useless.

(Webster 1789: 231, emphasis added)

Webster does not give any particular explanation in terms of the distinction between conditional and potential; however, as far as his descriptions are concerned, it seems that he conflates the two concepts. (So first, Webster (1784) categorised three moods: Indicative, Subjunctive and Potential. Then he changed the system into two: Indicative and Subjunctive, claiming the distinction between the Indicative and the Potential was useless (see above); by 1789, he was even suggesting that the existence of mood system in English is dubious.) By the end of the nineteenth century, grammarians such as Meiklejohn were noting the demise of the subjunctive as an inflectional category and suggest that the existence of the mood category as the particular verb form is almost invalid: "The Subjunctive Mood is rapidly dying out of use" (Meiklejohn 1889: 39).

Some grammarians even suggest many more subdivisions of mood (cf. e.g. White 1761, Ward 1765, Fell 1784, Harrison 1848: 245-7). Consider the following from White:

- (26) The Moods in English are, the Indicative Mood, the Subjunctive Mood, the Elective Mood, the Potential Mood, the Determinative Mood, the Obligative Mood, the Compulsive Mood, the Imperative Mood, the Infinitive Mood, and the Participles; in all, Ten.

(White 1761: 4)

Harrison (1848: 245) similarly suggests that “we might have Indicative, Imperative, Potential, Optative, Subjunctive, Infinitive, Vocative, Precative, Interrogative, Causal, Reflective, etc.”: yet many of these are simply subcategories of either the Potential or Subjunctive identified by other grammarians. Harrison also notes:

- (27) Grammarians differ in the classification of moods and tenses in one and the same language.

(Harrison 1848: 245)

- (28) The number of moods is obviously, therefore, a matter of uncertainty, depending upon the peculiar genius and construction of a language.

(Harrison 1848: 247)

Taking the comments of these and other grammarians as a whole, we can conclude:

- (a) The differences in verb forms associated with certain moods are not clearly discriminated, with more than one mood being denoted by the same (inflected) forms quite often. (e.g. the verb form of the indicative may be identical to that of the subjunctive / potential)
- (b) Some of the differentiated forms are simply historical relics and no longer productive (e.g. the deterioration of the subjunctive)
- (c) The distinction made between different categories is primarily one of function rather than form.



- (d) It can be said that each mood tends to be explained and established as a contrast to and even possibly derivative from the Indicative.
- (e) LModE grammarians did not show a great deal of consensus in the number of moods, nor in how such moods were expressed in the language. The most problematic part seems to tend to concentrate on the expression of the speaker's subjective attitude, a core property of modality, as I argue immediately below.

### 2.3.2 Modality

There is a definition of modality proposed by Huddleston which seems to represent a widespread view of what this aspect of grammar is about:

- (29) Modality is centrally concerned with the speaker's attitude towards the factuality or actualisation of the situation expressed by the rest of the clause.

(Huddleston 2002: 173)

The means of expression of modality can be quite varied:

- (30) Modality is expressed in language in a variety of ways morphologically, lexically, systematic, or via intonation. These are not mutually exclusive.

(Bybee and Fleischman 1995: 2)

Palmer also points out modality as non-assertive in contrast to assertive unmodalized utterances (2003: 14). With this perspective, modality is obviously based primarily on meaning, not form. Huddleston describes mood as a category of grammar (in its systematic sense) and modality as a category of meaning (1984: 166). Palmer (2003) also expresses a similar opinion.

It is nonetheless impossible to neglect aspects of form in any discussion of modality, since it is also true that the position of the modal auxiliary verb as a means of expression of modality in English is central. It is said that only the modal auxiliary verb, of all the linguistic means to express modality, can be used to represent all kinds of modalities (Palmer 2001: 100). Similarly Huddleston (1984: 166) points out that the modal auxiliary verb can cover all the meanings which modal adjectives, adverbs and catenatives express, and says that the modal auxiliary verb is important in English modal expressions in terms of both form and meaning<sup>9</sup>. As noted in section 2.3.1 above, mood is the concept which categorises senses and meanings regarding the speaker's state of mind based on differences in the inflectional forms of the verb, an analysis based very much on grammatical relations from classical languages. The systematisation seems quite strained in English. On the other hand, the concept of 'modality' seems to place meaning as primary and the related formal means of expression follows. Yet it is clear that the emergence and the existence of the modal auxiliary verb and its relation to the expression of modality cannot be ignored as an important issue in the study of modality as far as the description in the grammar book is concerned.

For example, Priestley describes the condition of the conjugation of the verb in English as the marker of mood. He says that "very few of these modifications of verbs are used in modern 'European' languages, and particularly in 'English', but we supply this defect of modifications by auxiliary verbs" (1762: 119). Lowth (1762: iv, 58-59) also points out that the auxiliaries in English deal with modes, times and voices; Greenwood (1711: 119) and Cobbett (1823: 46-47) also agree with this perspective. As Priestley (1762: 119) and Lowth (1762: iv) indicate, the inflections of the (principal) verb in English were not numerous enough to cover the varieties of the forms of mood. Furthermore, although Cannon (1845: 64) says that generally moods are five in number (Indicative, Imperative, Infinitive, Subjunctive, Potential), he doubts the validity of the existence of both the Subjunctive and the Potential:

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<sup>9</sup> This condition makes the modal auxiliary verb a formidable object for foreign learners of English.

- (31) The Subjunctive, ... is merely an elliptical mode of expression, except, perhaps, in the verb 'to be', where we find a subjunctive inflection. The Potential is made up of two or more verbs, and therefore it can with no propriety, if we are to follow the principle laid down, that a change of form is necessary to constitute an inflection, be called a part of any one of them.

(Connon 1845: 64)

In other words, Connon suggests there is no particular reason to insist on the existence of a proper mood system in English. The gradual loss of the traditional modal distinctions by means of the inflection of the main verb (especially of the Subjunctive mood) was reported (Sweet 1900: 108, 1903: 109). Similar or related indications are pointed out throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (e.g. Greenwood 1711: 119, Lowth 1762: iv, Priestley 1762: 119, Webster 1789: 257, Meilan 1803: 65, Cobbett 1823: 46, Maetzner 1874 vol.2:107). As far as this situation is concerned, the process of the transition was rather slow, but surely in progress at the beginning of the Late Modern period. In short, while the unsuitability of and difficulty in the adoption of a verb-inflection based mood system for English is pointed out, most of the authors of the grammar book tended to pay attention to the important position of the auxiliary verb, or more specifically, the modal auxiliary verb as the alternative marker to express the subjunctive. While similar phenomena have been discussed throughout the period in terms of the issue of the use of the modal auxiliary verb, we can still see that the grammarians' attentions seemed to have changed to the content of (the subjunctive) mood, and what kind of senses were expressed by which modal auxiliary verbs. Davis' remark (1830: 76) about potentiality or potential mood below clearly reflects this situation.

- (32) There are other writers on this subject, who exclude the potential mood from their division, because it is formed, not by varying the principal verb, but by means of the auxiliary verbs,

*may, can, might, could, would*, etc.; but if we recollect, that moods are used 'to signify various intentions of the mind, and various modifications and circumstances of action,' we shall perceive, that those auxiliaries, far from interfering with this design, do, in the clearest manner, support and exemplify it.

(Davis 1830: 76)

This suggests that the accuracy of the observation and analysis by grammarians may also have improved and increased over time.

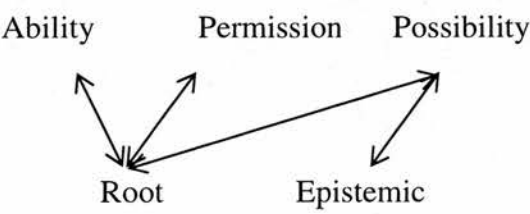
One concept often discussed in studies of modality is that subjectivised expressions are logically divided into two sets: those expressing necessity and those expressing possibility (Lyons 1977: 164). This perspective looks at a linguistic expression assuming it is composed of two factors: the core and the modifying parts. The core is concerned with ideas of fact and truth, and to the propositional part of the expression. The modifying part represents how the core is individualized, with a variety of expressions used to clarify what the speaker's attitude is. Lyons (1977) explains that the source of all modal expressions starts from two fundamental senses: "possibility" and "necessity" and these two bring about or lead to the others (see further Facchinetti 2003: 302 and Klinge 1993). In this conceptualisation, Lyons (1977: 791, 793) refers to another two terms, "alethic" and "epistemic", to represent 'necessity' and 'possibility' respectively. Another term "deontic" (= Greek 'binding') has been more popularly adopted to represent one of the two basic modalities, replacing 'alethic'. Also, the existence of the two basic parts of modal logic: 'necessity' and 'possibility' and the two basic modalities: 'deontic' and 'epistemic' have come to be regarded as more flexibly combined with each other. What this means is that rather than having the former, strongly-connected combinations of necessity – alethic and possibility – epistemic, more flexible combinations between these factors have been proposed by grammarians (e.g. Huddleston 1984: 166-167). Furthermore, the term "dynamic" is sometimes added to the subtypes of modality (e.g. by Huddleston 2002: 178), while Coates (1983) has "root" (combining deontic and dynamic aspects) as a contrast to 'epistemic' modality.

Coates also adopts other terms to explain the variety of meanings with *can* and *may* (1983: 103-104), whereby there is one combination of the kinds of modality: root – epistemic on the one hand, and another regarding the meaning as a combination of concepts of semantics and modal logic: ability – permission – possibility, as follows:

<i>Can</i> :	Ability
	Root possibility
	Permission
<i>May</i> :	Root possibility
	Permission
	Epistemic possibility

In these combinations, it is estimated that ‘ability’ and ‘permission’ belong to ‘root’ modality, since she clearly describes ‘root ability’ and ‘root permission’ in her explanation of the meanings of *could* and *might* (1983: 107, 147). Now the pattern of the combinations between the modality and the other meanings is irregular. ‘Root’ has links to all three, but ‘epistemic’ has links to only one:

**Figure 2.1      Connection between modality and meaning**

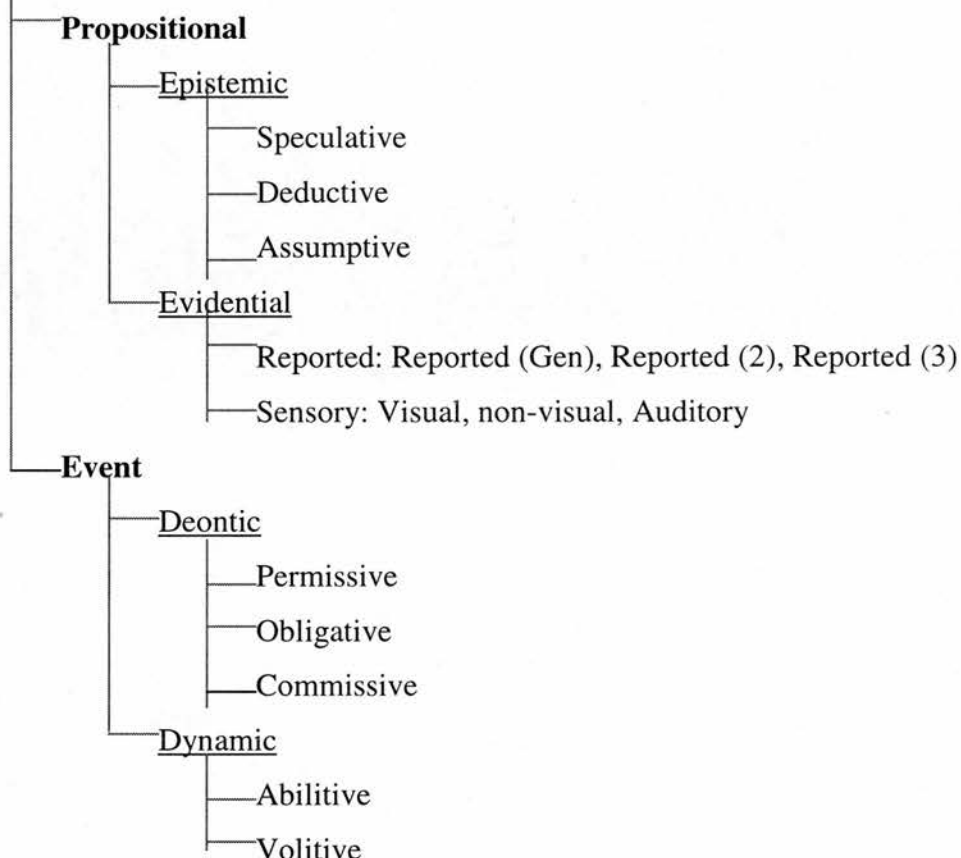


Furthermore, the irregularity increases with Coates’ explanation of the meanings of *will* and *shall*. Although she refers to root and epistemic differences, they are not described in more substantial explanations of the meanings. Instead, several terms of semantic aspect are independently adopted as more concrete representations of each

modal auxiliary verb, such as 'intention', 'volition', 'prediction', 'obligation', etc. without touching on their coordination with root or epistemic modality (1983: 197).

Palmer (2001) proposes a different categorization of modality. First, he has two fundamental modalities: "propositional" and "event". Propositional modality includes expressions which denote the speaker's subjective judgment about the states of the proposition, basically about the factuality of the proposition. Event modality includes expressions which show different states of the proposition as conditioned by things such as the imposition of obligation, or the statement of relatively objective ability, etc. As a result, the former is divided into two subsets, namely, "epistemic" and "evidential" modality. The latter is also divided into two: "deontic" and "dynamic". Moreover, each of the subcategories is further subdivided. Epistemic has subcategories "speculative", "deductive" and "assumptive". Evidential modality includes three different kinds of "reported" categories and also three different kinds of "sensory" ones. There are three subcategories of deontic modality: "permissive", "obligative" and "commissive", and two of dynamic: "abilitative" and "volitive". This is schematically represented below.

(33)

**Modality**

(based on Palmer 2001: 22)

As Perkins (1983: 10) suggests, it seems that there is no definitive way to categorise modality which can be agreed by every one, especially once every detailed characteristic sense with each expression is pursued. This corresponds to what the authors of the grammar book in Late Modern English suggested (e.g. White 1761, Priestley 1762). Given this complex classification of some subcategories of modality, in my thesis I will deal with the more familiar aspects or concepts of modality to provide a more practical understanding of the modal senses expressed by LModE grammarians. Although they may not be regarded as the best categories in a discussion of modality, they are still often included in the system of modality as the schematic picture above shows. In the following section, I move on to the data from



the late Modern English period. Although the term ‘modality’ had not been established as a category or subject of study, similar senses are often referred to.

### **2.3.2.1 On the various subcategories of modality in LModE grammars**

Sweet’s (1900: 107-8) perspective on mood was introduced in section 2.3.1.1. It is based mainly on criteria associated more with meaning rather than (verb) form. When Sweet analysed mood, he considered particularly how propositional expressions were modified and found the modification was achieved mainly by adding a subjective perspective. He notes that there exists the contrast between “thought-statements” and “fact-statements” in English. The ‘thought-statement’ is achieved through the periphrastic use of the auxiliaries and the use of inflections especially in utilizing the past forms, and the ‘fact-statement’ is composed of the simple assertions which are generally marked as ‘Indicative’ in the mood system (Sweet 1900: 107-8). This viewpoint that the modalized issues, that is, those denoting human feelings or attitudes, can be discriminated by the different modifications between subject and predicate, had already been indicated by some grammarians: for instance, Lowth points out the relationship between subject and predicate, setting out two modes, “Primary” and “Secondary”, depending on how they are connected, i.e. “joined simply” or “with some kind of limitation” respectively (1762: 60). Such descriptions illustrate that modality was seen in the LModE period to be realized by particular auxiliary verbs. Even in some LModE grammars, therefore, modality is seen to be expressed primarily in the syntax, rather than in the morphology.

Each modal auxiliary verb is often analysed extensively by LModE grammarians. When the descriptions of the meanings (functions) of the modals are observed, it is rare to find overlaps between the modals in these prescriptivist texts. Some examples of definitions from the grammar books are provided below.

- (34) *Will*: volition (internal, predictive + promissive); *Shall*: future destination (external, predictive only); *May*: permissive, power (external); *Can*: potential, power (internal); *Must*: necessity  
(Latham 1841: 486-7)

- (35) *Will*: purpose, foretell (first person); *Shall*: foretell (second, third persons), threaten, command; *Can*, *Could*: power, ability; *Would*: will, inclination; *Should*: future event, duty; *Must*: necessity  
(Meilan 1803: 59, 61-2)

- (36) *Will*, *Shall*: futurity (different nuances depending on persons); *May*: possibility; *Can*: power; *Must*: necessity  
(Walker 1805: 34)

- (37) *Will*, *Shall*: future (different nuances depending on persons); *May*, *Might*: liberty with some doubt, wish (*may*), permission, advice, elegantly soften a question; *Can*, *Could*: ability; *Must*: indispensable necessity  
(Angus 1812: 68, 70)

Each modal, therefore, according to these grammarians, has its own set of meanings which are different from the others (except for some combinations of the present and the preterit forms of modals): there seems to be little overlap and confusion. However, as already stated, certain auxiliary verbs have several different meanings, and some of the meanings seem to be similar to those of the other auxiliaries, even if they are not completely synonymous, given the subtle difference in their nuances and significations depending on context and the situation of the discourse. Moreover, again, probably because of the nature of grammatical tradition, each grammarian often introduced his own interpretations to explain which

auxiliaries have what significations especially in the fine details<sup>10</sup> (e.g. White 1761, Fell 1784). As a detailed description with regard to the senses which can be expressed by the modal auxiliary verb, Fell's work *An Essay Towards an English Grammar* (1784) stands out. At the end of his text, he provides an additional account entitled *A Dissertation on the Nature and Peculiar Use of Certain Hypothetical Verbs in the English Language*. Although Fell does not treat *must* there, many detailed conditions of the use of the rest of the eight modal auxiliary verbs are introduced, interweaving several distinctive senses which can be expressed by each of the forms. His description of *could* is introduced below. I tried to make the distinctions of each case (use and sense) clear, so this is a paraphrase, not a direct quotation; but we can clearly see how Fell believed that the uses could be differentiated depending on contexts and circumstances:

(38)

*Could* (as the past tense of *can*, in the indicative mode)

But *could* is also used in a peculiar and hypothetical sense, without any regular respect to time:

1. After conditional terms, denoted hypothetical, or conditional power:

I were but little happy, if I *could* say how much.

2. *Could* is often used to denote the possible consequence of some conditional event:

But you, my brace of Lords, were I so minded, I here *could* pluck his highness' frown upon you.

3. *Could*, placed after terms of wishing, denotes an hypothetical possibility:

O! that it *could* be proved, that some night-tripping fairy had exchang'd; - Oh! *could* our mourning ease thy misery; I wish, I

---

<sup>10</sup> Issues of right and wrong usage in connection with the applications of the auxiliary verbs are to be discussed in a separate section on the error book or the usage book. (e.g. Hodgson 1889: 95-6, Sundby et al. 1991:211): see chapter 4 below.

*could* know that to be, just as thou informest me; I with I *could* depart from my own body; I *would* I *could* see that happy day.

4. *Could* is sometimes used in a sense so entirely hypothetical, that it only imitates what would be the bias of the mind, were there a possibility of the thing:

now *could* I wish to ascend the chariot of Triptolemus; now *could* I desire to yoke the dragons of Medea; now *could* I wish to take wings to be waved, either thine Perseus, or thine, O Dædalus!

5. *Could*, is used to imitate both present power, and a strong inclination, with an ellipsis of some condition:

Although I *could* tell thee as a friend, I *could* be sad, and sad indeed; he *could* never come better, he *shall* come in; I *could* tell you more news too; Marcellus and Flavius are put to silence:

(based on Fell 1784: 174-176)

The focus of the description is usage based, on how the modal auxiliary verb is interpreted. The senses which are taken up are those involved in the property of modality, such as hypotheticality, conditionality and possibility. Moreover, while the different modal senses overlap with each other, it is the subtle conditions of use which allow us to distinguish and differentiate each possible utterance. The descriptions of the modal auxiliary verb in some of the grammar books tell of the similarity and variety of the modal sense. The next section discusses this classification of auxiliary verbs in LModE in more detail.

## 2.4 The classification of auxiliary verbs in LModE grammars

### 2.4.1 The recognition of the category ‘modal’ among the auxiliaries

This section considers how the special characteristics of the modal auxiliaries are treated in grammar books of the period. As the word ‘auxiliary’ suggests, such verbs have the role of supporting the main predicate in a clause. It works to expand some aspect of the interpretation of the principal verb, so, in spite of sharing the same name ‘verb’, the auxiliary is in charge of quite different functions and roles compared to the principal. We will see that many grammarians have their own idea as to how the auxiliaries are to be distinguished from the principals, and it is possible to observe that there is a certain overarching tendency or pattern concerning the auxiliary verbs. Appendix 3 provides an outline of how different grammarians view auxiliary verbs as a whole. This table is based on the descriptions of 41 randomly collected books written by grammarians in the LModE period. Each grammarian often classified the auxiliaries by adopting their own category label. As for the name of the larger category, most of the grammarians simply use “auxiliary verbs”; however, we can see that some use “helping verbs” as an alternative (Greenwood 1711, Buchanan 1762, Murray 1795 & 1808, Lennie 1827, Davis 1830, Ramsay 1892). This term ‘helping verbs’ is more frequently seen in the eighteenth and nineteenth century and thereafter the name has not seemed to be used very much.

While the word ‘auxiliary’ had been adopted frequently during both centuries, another word “sign” came to be added to ‘auxiliary’ (i.e. “auxiliary signs”: Ash 1763, Webster 1784, Belcher 1815). Moreover, there are cases where only the word ‘signs’ is adopted (Davidson 1815, Smith 1816, Andrew 1817, Cobbett 1823, Stephen 1906). With these examples, it can be observed from the definitions of the term that the aspect of (the meaning of) ‘signification’ is intended. The auxiliary verbs which are said to belong to the Potential and the Subjunctive moods are also the same words which affect some aspect of the signification of the entire clause. The kinds of signification indicated are rich in variety as we can see in the examples in section 2.3.2.1. above. When each form is focused on, it is possible to notice that

it is quite difficult to regard it as having a unique meaning or function. Some of the significations might sound more contentful, such as ‘volition’ and ‘liberty’, and others might be more conceptualised as procedural such as ‘necessity’ and ‘possibility’ which are based on modal logic. The signification ‘futurity’ or ‘future’ is very problematic to analyse. At first, it seems that it is simply a matter of tense. On the other hand, ‘futurity’ is also associated with several other senses such as remoteness, and such related senses like indirectness and hypotheticality. In short, futurity seems to relate to concepts of both tense and modality. I return to this below.

Of all the analyses of auxiliary verbs proposed by grammarians in the present corpus, there is one particular idiosyncrasy which should be explained. In the table in appendix 3, Mason adopts two terms - the “notional” verb and the “auxiliary” verb - to categorize subsets of modal verbs. This is quite irregular. What does he mean by these terms? Mason explains:

- (39) A verb is a *notional* verb, when it is so used to retain its full and proper meaning, as “I *will* go” (i.e. ‘I am resolved to go’); “You *may* play in the garden” (i.e. ‘You are permitted to play’); “Thou *shalt* not steal” (i.e. ‘Thou art bound not to steal’); “He *would* not come when I called him” (i.e. ‘He did not choose to come’).

A verb is an *auxiliary* verb when its own proper signification drops out of sight, and it merely serves to mark some modification of the notion expressed by another verb. Thus in “He *will* fall”, *will* does not imply that he is resolved to fall, but only marks futurity. In “I work hard that I *may* gain the prize”, *may* does not express permission, but helps to indicate the subjunctive mood of the verb ‘gain’. In “I *have* been ill”, *have* has altogether lost the idea of possessing, and has become a mere ‘tense-sign’.

(Mason 1901: 64)

Although he says that the meanings of the 'notional' verbs are the 'full and proper' ones, this is probably because he is referring to their older, root meanings, not to independent lexical verbs. On the other hand, what we can see here is that the meanings of the 'auxiliary' verbs are getting more subjective, and the meanings are more grammaticalized than the root ones, i.e. they represent epistemicity, or speaker's knowledge. As a result, his categorization of the auxiliary verbs is often really about the distinction between root and epistemic modality.

It is possible to notice that the auxiliaries are roughly divided into those which possess certain modal significations: e.g. *may* (liberty), *can* (power), *will* (volition), *shall* (authority), *must* (necessity), and those which do not: *do*, *have* and *be*. These former modals are often divided further into two categories, namely significations of possibility and of necessity; it still seems possible to divide into even more detailed and subtly differentiated categories (cf. e.g. White 1761, Fell 1784, Sedger 1798).

This might give the impression that such subdivided significations are neatly explained. However, in reality, it is difficult to find such an explanation of the process, given the layered subdivision in the grammar books. The sub-categorisation is based on today's knowledge of modality, i.e. not on analyses provided by the LModE grammarians themselves. Otherwise, it is difficult to notice any systematic layered structure of analysis. Actually, the senses which are given in the systematic explanation of modality today seem to have already been recognised, since the significations which are described as the senses of mood often coincide with the senses in present-day discussions of modality. Nevertheless, the concept 'modality' had not really taken root in the grammatical tradition yet. For the present, I illustrate the general practice of the treatment of auxiliaries through a discussion of *will* and *shall*.

It seems that in the earlier part of LModE period *will* and *shall* were generally regarded by grammarians as having some significations of futurity, foretelling, and threatening. For instance, Sedger (1798) suggests:



- (40) *Shall* and *Shalt* seem to assign power or choice entirely to the first person in each number and as though it would choose for or compel to the other two persons.

*Will* and *Wilt* seem to assign power intirely to the first person in each number, and knowledge in respect to the other two.

(Sedger, J. 1798:48-9)

In the eighteenth century, *will* and *shall* were not always defined as modal, but rather as periphrastic future tenses. In the nineteenth century some grammarians introduce *will* and *shall* as members of the same category as *may* and *can*, which are categorized as belonging to the potential or the subjunctive, possibly suggesting a common characteristic or function that the group possesses as a whole. In addition, the terms “absolute” and “conditional” are labels attached to the explanation of these modal auxiliary verbs in some grammars of this period (e.g. Webster 1784). This idea and adoption of these terms seems to have been not so popular, however, since only a few authors introduced these terms in their books, and used the terms idiosyncratically.

- (41) *shall*: interrogatively, it denotes futurity with necessity, duty, obligation

*will*: affirmatively, it denotes futurity with necessity, obligation, choice

The Signs *may*, *can*, *shall* and *will* form absolute tenses; *might*, *could*, *would* and *should* form tenses sometimes absolute, and sometimes conditional.

(extracted from Andrew 1817: 35)

Then, in the latter part of the nineteenth century another new term was to emerge. Maetzner (1874) discusses the concept of “modal” rather than ‘sign’. With this idea he explains that it deals more with issues like irrealis.

- (42) The modal verbs which are here particularly considered are *may*, *shall*, *will* and *let*. ... regarded as an unreal one or one not realized, and as a conceded, striven for, occasioned or requested activity, according to the nature of the construction. Other verbal notions, as, *must*, *can*, *dare* might accordingly be regarded as more precisely determining periphrases of the notion of the conjunctive,

(Maetzner 1784 vol.2: 130)

All the auxiliary terms indicated above are regarded as having some modal senses. This linkage between modal auxiliaries (including *will* and *shall*) and conditional / hypothetical expressions continues into the turn of the century.

- (43) As ‘present conditional’  
 ‘if we miss the train – which I hope we shall not – we shall have to wait...’  
 ‘to express a modest wish, request, or question, some such hypothetical clause as ‘if it were possible’ ‘if you will allow me – give me...’

(extracted from Sweet 1903: 112, emphasis added)

When Sweet talks of a “modest wish”, we see that the group of modal auxiliaries as a grammatical category had been recognised in a grammar book as an emerging means of marking politeness. Although there may have existed some confusion in terms of the relation between modality and tense, especially regarding the sense of futurity, the adoption of the concept of modality seemed to be more appropriate than the one of mood in describing this aspect of the structure of Modern English, since the concept of mood system which was taken over from the classical languages seemed less suitable. The next section looks at the treatment of the past

tense forms of the central modals<sup>11</sup>, as a way into a larger discussion of modal verbs as politeness markers in chapters 3 and 4.

## 2.4.2 The preterit form and modality

In the corpus of grammar books I examined, preterit forms of the modal are treated rather independently and their characteristic uses often explained alongside the present forms. It is unusual for preterit forms of other verbs (e.g. lexical verbs like *break*, *expand* and *type*) to be treated like this. In my corpus, the four preterit forms of the major modal auxiliary verbs: *would*, *should*, *could* and *might* are frequently treated separately and an explanation of their own uses is provided.

From 36<sup>12</sup> grammar books in my LModE corpus, I extracted a list of all of those verbal forms classed as auxiliary verbs (including forms listed as sign, helping verb and the like). The 14 auxiliaries so identified are: *do*, *have*, *be*, *did*, *had*, *will*, *shall*, *can*, *may*, *must*, *would*, *should*, *could*, and *might*<sup>13</sup>. Of these words, the present forms are of course more frequently classified as an auxiliary verb. *Do* is so categorised in 31 books (= 86% of the corpus), *have* in 32 (89%), *be* in 28 (78%), *will* in 33 (92%), *shall* in 34 (97%), *can* in 35 (97%), *may* in 36 (100%) and *must* in 30 (83%). Of the preterits, *did* is categorised in 9 books (25%), *had* in 7 (19%), *would* in 22 (61%), *should* in 23 (64%), and *could* and *might* in 24 (67%). While the figures for *did* and *had* are quite low (itself an interesting phenomenon, marking the modals out further as a particular kind of auxiliary verb), those of all the preterits of the major modals are relatively high. This situation suggests that the preterits are regarded by the grammarians as more independently established as separate auxiliary verbs. An analysis of the descriptions of such forms supports this idea. There is little to distinguish present and preterit forms in terms of how frequently they are classified as marking modality. *Will* is connected to 'modalities' in 7 books, *shall* in

<sup>11</sup> I regard *will*, *shall*, *may*, *can* and *must* as central modals since most grammarians select these words when they discuss the core modal auxiliary verb.

<sup>12</sup> There are 36 grammar books in my corpus which describe/use the word 'auxiliary' to point out the terms.

<sup>13</sup> Some might think that it is strange to see *did* and *had* in the list. I included them just because they appeared in some of the descriptions in the grammar book.

8, *can* 14, *may* 16, *must* 10, *would* 9, *should* 10, *could* 10, and *might* 10. Here we can see that the preterits are indicated as ‘modality-related’ standing up to comparison with the present tense forms.

There are some opinions which view the preterit form of the modals as having semantic features of conditionality, in contrast to the factuality of the present form. For example, Webster (1784: 37) describes *may*, *can* and *must* as absolute form and *might*, *could*, *should* and *would* as conditional form in the explanation of the Potential mood, as discussed in sections 2.2. and 2.3 above. Andrew (1817: 35) regards *will*, *shall*, *can* and *may* as absolute and *would*, *should*, *could* and *might* as conditional. (cf. again section 2.2 and 2.3 above) Such a preterit form has also a certain relation to politeness expressions. It is said that the ‘conditional’ use of the preterit in certain kinds of constructions implies some uncertainty and indirectness, which are also considered to be linked to further senses such as a pragmatically softened utterance. Therefore, we can see certain possible dimensions of a linked network from the semantic meaning which is more specifically associated with a single word to its pragmatic use where meaning emerges in specific discourse contexts. First, there are core semantic senses of the modals, such as ‘liberty’, ‘power’, ‘obligation’, ‘promise’, etc. which are directly introduced from the root meanings of the modal verbs. Then, other more pragmatic-based dimensions which include implications like uncertainty, indirectness, moderateness, politeness, etc. evolve. Here a question emerges: is this expansion of the implications associated with the preterit uses alone? Pragmatic meanings must also be associated with uses of the present form: expressions in the form of interrogatives such as ‘*May* I have your attention?’ and ‘*Shall* we dance?’ can also be taken as indirect, modest, or elegant, and such kinds of conditional states seem to be suggested in the grammar books of the LModE period: for example, Fell (1784) regards such forms broadly as conditional, while Ramsay (1892) sees them specifically as modest or polite. However, there are further subtle differences in degrees or nuances with regard to expressions of modesty or politeness in the present and the preterit forms. Specifically, the preterit of any verb has a range of particular nuances and senses depending on the construction in which it appears, so it might be possible to say that

these senses of uncertainty and indirectness as the properties of the modal preterit are likely to be inherited from uses of preterit forms generally. The semantics and pragmatics of the modal auxiliary verb are discussed in the next section.

## **2.5 The semantics and pragmatics of the modal auxiliary verb**

### **2.5.1 Some issues in semantic and pragmatic theory relevant to the study of modals**

The term ‘semantics’ is used broadly to describe “the study of meaning” (Lyons 1977: 1), though some have considered semantics to be more text-focused and pragmatics to be the term used to describe the study of meaning as it relates to (external) context (Saeed 2003: 8). This division in the academic study of meaning seems to have occurred at some time around the middle of the twentieth century. It is said that Morris (1938: 6) was the person who first introduced the term ‘pragmatics’ in linguistic discourse, explaining that the purpose of pragmatics was to study “the relation of signs to interpreters” and semantics was to study “the relations of signs to the objects to which the signs are applicable” (cited in Kasher 1998: 7). Carnap (1942: 9) regarded pragmatics as associated with issues of “explicit reference” and semantics as “only the expressions and their designate” (cited in Kasher 1998: 7). Descriptions of the distinction between these two areas of inquiry have still not agreed on definitions. Stalnaker (1972) describes semantics as the study of “proposition” being isolated from other external factors and pragmatics as the study of “linguistic acts and the other contexts in which they are performed” (cited in Kasher 1998: 56, 58). The vagueness of the distinction also reflects the dividing line between the domains of semantics and pragmatics within the whole aspect of ‘meaning’. A common view is that it is difficult to draw a clear border between them (e.g. Lyons 1977: 25, Peccei 1999: 1-2). Saeed (2003) explains that many aspects of semantic meaning more or less include incidental contexts. It is

therefore important to regard differences between the two as matters of degree, i.e. whether the meaning is more textual or more contextual will suggest whether the phenomenon is more semantic or more pragmatic, respectively.

As a result, when we need recourse to the idea of a semantic – pragmatic distinction, the attitude we should have towards viewing the meanings of the modals is to see that an aspect of meaning is more / less semantic / pragmatic, not clearly semantic or clearly pragmatic. The world of modality as a whole is a fusion of both semantic and pragmatic factors. Such a continuum is also suggested by other grammarians (e.g. Sperber and Wilson 1995, Blakemore 2002). The flexible dynamics of the function / meaning of the modal auxiliary verb are noted by Palmer (1990: 65), who suggests that the meaning of each modal auxiliary verb is composed of several elements of sense whose existence makes the structure of the meaning of each form complex. The network which connects such elements of sense to each other therefore also connects semantic and pragmatic meaning. This point is suggested in some LModE grammar books, even if only opaquely or indirectly. Section 2.5.2 and 2.5.3 below explore this kind of issue further, and chapter 5, section 5.5 illustrates the links and connections between the extensive senses using pictures as models.

### **2.5.1.1 Hypotheticality and modality**

In 2.4.2. I noted some correlation between the preterit form of the modal auxiliary verb and particular aspects of modality. This is developed in this section, which begins with a discussion of more general issues which relate hypotheticality to modality.

Bybee (1995: 505) claims that the modality of the modal auxiliary verb is characterised first of all by ‘incompleteness’. The idea is that the incompleteness is conceptualised as hypotheticality in a particular context, since the hypotheticality is derived from potentiality as a feature of many modal verbs (Bybee 1995: 514). The point is that the hypotheticality which brings about a sense of politeness is almost exclusively derived only from the sense of incompleteness which is particularly



attached to the preterit form. Consequently, although Bybee (1995: 508) introduces an example of “polite or remote uses of past tense”, namely *I wanted to ask you a question*, she means that such a polite sense is different qualitatively from the one which includes hypotheticality. In fact, there is a general view which suggests that the past tense carries a certain remote, polite sense:

I wonder (if I *can* ask you a question).

I wondered (if I *could* ask you a question).

However, using the progressive (another marker of incompleteness) gives us an even more polite expression:

I wondered (if I *could* ask you a question).

I was wondering (if I *could* ask you a question).

Although the examples above do not represent the polite sense of the modal auxiliary verb, it is nonetheless an example of a polite sense associated with the state of incompleteness which is derived from an ‘isolation from the present’. As a result this seems to show that there is certain another additional polite sense linked to incompleteness. However, the sense of politeness cannot be calculated by such a unit by unit addition. If politeness can be calculated by sheer weight of numbers, the following expression should be more polite, but in reality, this is not normally adopted or used to express more politeness:

?I would *be wondering* (if I *could* ask you a question).

In this chapter so far it has been suggested that several factors are involved in terms of establishing the meaning of a single modal auxiliary verb, used in a particular context. It seems rational to suggest that each usage event is a selection from the mixture of the potential senses, depending on contexts at the moment of expression. For instance, senses such as hypotheticality, incompleteness and



indirectness can emerge simultaneously. When a certain expression which includes a particular modal auxiliary verb appears, the addressee's interpretation is the reflection of the overall effects of available senses which involve not only the more pragmatic based meanings, but also more semantic ones like obligation, power, authority, etc. Support for this idea can be found in Coates' (1983) explanation of the interpretation of the meaning of the modal auxiliary verb. She adopts the term "fuzzy" to describe such a mixed situation (Coates 1983: 11-12). If this is right, hypotheticality or at least something very much similar to hypotheticality, may be produced as a result of the effect of such a mixture. Although this idea does not clarify the claim that hypotheticality is the exclusive property of the preterit form of the modal auxiliary verb, it is possible to notice the flexible, dynamic creativity of such a system of analysis. This kind of connection between senses as a part of the conceptualisation and use of modal forms is also discussed in chapter 4, especially sections 4.1 to 4.3.

#### 2.5.1.2 Futurity and modality

As discussed in section 2.2, 'future' is sometimes regarded as a term simply within the category of tense and indeed such view is recognised as the traditional one (Palmer 2001: 105, 1990: 137, 160; cf. Davidsen-Nielsen 1988). However, an alternative view seems to be more common nowadays (cf. Palmer 1990: 66-67, 160; Swan 1995: 209-219). Swan (1995: 209) says "There are several ways to use verbs to talk about the future in English". One of the suggested applications of the future is titled "polite enquiries" (Swan 1995: 218). There he introduces some comparative examples.

- (44) *Will you be staying in this evening?* (very polite enquiry,  
suggesting 'I simply want to know your plans')  
*Are you going to stay in this evening?* (pressing for a decision)  
*Will you stay in this evening please?* (instruction or order)

In older English, **Shall you + infinitive** was used to make polite enquiries in this way.

(Swan 1995: 218)

Here while we can see how futurity and politeness may be related, it is also possible to notice that the interpretation depends much on situations and contexts. Palmer (1990: 66-67) also points out the association of some modal meanings with futurity:

- (45) When a modal verb is used to refer to the future with a simple form of the verb following it, there is often ambiguity between an epistemic and a deontic interpretation, or else a deontic interpretation is much more likely.

John may / might / must / should / will / would come tomorrow.

In all cases, however, the use of the progressive form of the verb, where there is no sense of duration, will usually force an epistemic interpretation:

John may / might / must / should / will / would be coming tomorrow.

Only if duration is clearly indicated will there be a deontic interpretation as in:

John must be working when the inspector arrives.

(Palmer 1990: 66-67)

Although the descriptions of the explanation of the uses of futurity are different between the two authors above, there is coherence regarding the combined effect of futurity and modality.

Historically, tenses were recognised based on certain verbal inflectional forms (Palmer 1990: 160, 2001: 105, Davidsen-Nielsen 1988). The arguments in favour of the alternative, i.e. more modern, view seem to be associated with the imperfect position of *will* and *shall* as the marker of future tense, since *will* and *shall*

often signify other senses such as intention, volition, obligation, etc. It is said that a pure future marking by *will* and *shall* is rare (Palmer 1990: 160). So, by and large these two terms involve other significations simultaneously with futurity. Examples of these other significations are the modal senses of possibility and necessity (e.g. Facchinetti 2003: 302), and also, connected with this, politeness. This view was commonly expressed in LModE grammars. For example, Sweet (1903: 114) refers to the softened down use which distinguishes *should* from *shall*.

- (46) In such a phrase as *you should not make personal remarks* the preterite *should* is substituted for the present *shall* in order to soften down the imperativeness of *you shall not make*. Here there is no conditional meaning; the *should* keeps its original meaning, and is not even an auxiliary.

(Sweet 1903: 114, cf. (34) in chapter 4 section 4.4.2.)

Ramsay (1892: 390-399) introduces the modest use regarding the expression with *will*, *would*, *shall* and *should*. For example, associations such as ‘*will you?*’ and ‘request’ (392); ‘*I shall*’ and ‘less explicit and self-asserting’ (391); and *would* and ‘desired or requested’ condition, and *should* and ‘mere supposition’ (395) are pointed out as the parts of their variety of futurity-combined uses.

- (47) “*Will you*” is a common form of request or appeal.

(Ramsay 1892: 392)

- (48) “*I shall*”, and generally to contain a tinge of volition.

There is a general impression that “*I shall*” is less explicit and self-asserting – hence more modest (- than “*I will*”).

(Ramsay 1892: 391)

- (49) in the protasis, *would* is used when the condition is a thing desired or requested;  
*should*, when it is a mere supposition of something undesirable or indifferent.

(Ramsay 1892: 395)

Even today, phrases such as ‘I *would* like to’ and ‘I *should* like to’ suggest a somewhat indirect, mild expression which leads to our understanding of a polite sense. The question is, ‘Are these expressions polite because they relate to futurity, and are therefore to some extent hypothetical?’ The concept of futurity itself does not appear directly connected to politeness very much. Rather, other factors are more prominent: intention and obligation, for instance, senses associated with the main verb ancestors of *will* and *shall*, are obviously related to the degree of politeness in the utterance as a whole.

In this section we have seen that the concept of modality is composed of both semantic and pragmatic factors. In this modal domain, there exists a variety of semantic and pragmatic senses, i.e. factors linked to each other in different degrees of strength and proximity, as a result of a complex and dynamic interactive process. The sense of politeness is related to and can be derived from a certain grammatical form (e.g. the preterit modal auxiliary verb) via some semantic and pragmatic factors, connected in a network, varying by situation and context. As for the matter of the present – past distinction in English, it is said that the past tense relates to a sense of indirectness, and that indirectness is perceived as more polite (Leech 1987: 119-121). Thomas (1995: 158) also supports this view pointing out that a sense of ambivalence associated with indirectness may also be related to politeness, since vague expressions allow the hearer more flexible interpretations. Ambivalent expressions may be less threatening to the hearer’s face (on which see further chapter 3, especially section 3.2), and therefore may be regarded as more polite. All in all, it seems that indirectness and ambivalence have close connections to the sense of politeness. These are secondary features of tense: as we can see in the case of

hypotheticality and the modal preterit, politeness is not associated with the grammaticalization of the conceptualisation of time itself, but a consequence of the indirectness that is associated with remoteness from the present. There exist certain senses which bridge the space between politeness and tense, strengthening the links between the two. Therefore, even though it seems that the sense of past is more closely related to the sense of politeness compared to the sense of futurity, this does not necessarily mean that the concept of past time itself is directly associated with politeness. Senses which are derived from the concept of past time must be more closely located or more strongly connected to politeness. Similarly, although the polite use of the state of future progressive ('*will be ...ing*') is also pointed out by Swan (1995: 218), I suggest that this too gives us a certain sense of indirectness. Futurity can be related to a variety of modal senses. The connection to politeness, as one of these varieties, however, does not seem to be strong, but rather secondary or indirect.

The next section looks at how such senses associated with the modal auxiliary verbs were explained in the grammar books in the LModE period.

### **2.5.2 An analysis of modal meaning in the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> century grammar book**

So far, I have discussed the definitions of and connections between mood and modality, and the treatment of the forms of auxiliary verbs, in LModE grammar books. This section deals with how the meanings of the modal auxiliary verb were treated, described and understood by the grammarians at that time. Here again, we see a situation in which politeness was associated with the modal auxiliary verb.

Key words regarding the implications and significations of the modals are raised by many grammarians, which suggests a network which is spread over semantic and pragmatic meanings for the modals as a whole as is suggested in the previous section. In many cases, the meaning of modal auxiliary verbs is often alluded to in the discussion of mood or tense: 'modality' as a concept had not yet

been established as a grammatical category by the grammarians, as noted in sections 2.2 and 2.3 above. Brown (1851) provides the following descriptions of the modals:

(53) *Shall and Will:*

Present Tense; but Signs of the Indicative First – Future

Imperfect Tense; but as Signs, Aorist, or Indefinite

*May:*

Present Tense; and Sign of the Potential Present

Imperfect Tense; and Sign of the Potential Imperfect

*Can:*

Present Tense; and Sign of the Potential Present

Imperfect Tense; and Sign of the Potential Imperfect

*Must:*

Present Tense; and Sign of the Potential Present

(based on Brown 1851: 346-7)

Here modal auxiliary verbs are explained in terms of the tense and mood categories they belong to. The modal auxiliary verb is the centre of the description. On the other hand, some grammarians group the forms by the mood they express. In this case, the categories of mood or tense are placed first, and then the modal auxiliary verbs are allocated to the categorised moods or tenses as representative forms or terms. Cobbett (1823) and Lennie (1827) adopt this description.

(54) Indicative Mood: Future: *shall and will*

Subjunctive Mood: signs: *may, might, could, would, should*

(based on Cobbett 1823: 48)

- (55) Indicative: future: *will* and *shall*  
 Potential: Present: *may*, *can*  
 Past: *might*, *could*, *would*, *should*

(based on Lennie 1827: 27-8, 37)

At the end of the LModE period, Earle (1898), who was one of the rare grammarians in the period who actually adopted the word ‘modal’ as a way to identify a subcategory of the verbal system at that time, observed:

- (56) the Subjunctive and Optative Moods found help in the following Auxiliary Verbs.

Present	Preterite
[shall] <sup>14</sup>	should
[can]	could
may	might
mote	[must]
[owe]	ought
[will]	would

(Earle 1898: 51)

Therefore, it can be said that there are two general methods for classifying modal auxiliary verbs. One takes the form, and then illustrates the modal sense that form can express; the other takes the sense of the modality, and then lists the forms by which that modality is expressed. The modals tend to be conceptualized with reference to, or at least, connected to, the basic idea of mood system as an inflectional category of the verb. Some grammarians ascribed more moods to individual modals. Generally modals had been introduced as marking either or both of the potential or subjunctive moods; but White (1761: 4), for instance, sets up ten moods: the Indicative, the Subjunctive, the Elective, the Potential, the Determinative,

<sup>14</sup> In this description, ‘Brackets are used to exclude words that have no part in the modal action’ (Earle 1898: 51).



the Obligative, the Compulsive, the Imperative, the Infinitive and the Participles.<sup>15</sup> However, White does not provide any particular detailed information about the nature of the mood categories, so this has to be the analyst's supposition. Only the names are introduced, and there seems to be some confusion regarding the differentiation between the listed categories. For example, the situation which categorised 'obligative' along with 'compulsive' can also be a source of confusion. There also seems to be little to distinguish between 'Compulsive' and 'Imperative', and there is no explanation provided. Similarly, 'infinitive' and 'participle' point out morphological categories, different from the other categories listed, which denote modal senses. We saw that the grammarians were keen to illustrate how the modals expressed a series of morphological mood based categories (such as Cobbett's in this section and Murray's in section 2.2). This, however, tells us very little of the semantics of the modals. Equally, Bayly (1758) does not describe any aspect of the meanings of each modal, apart from stating that *may*, *might*, *would*, *could*, and *should* function as markers of Subjunctive (mood), and *shall* and *will* as markers of future (tense) (Bayly 1758: 56). There are descriptions which show what the mood categories are, but it is difficult to find an explanation which informs the reader of what the modals mean. (e.g. Bayly 1758: 53).

However, although not all the grammar books provide the explanation of the meaning of modals, there are several books which try to provide more detail about the meanings of each form. Two examples of relatively simple descriptions are introduced below.

- (57) For the Possibility of the Thing is expressed by *can* or *could*.  
 the Liberty of the speaker to do a thing, by *may* or *might*.  
 the Inclination of the Will is expressed by *will* or *would*.

---

<sup>15</sup> It is possible to establish from the evidence that White provides that 'Elective' means not fixed and defined, 'Determinative' means settled, 'Obligative' means things obligatory, 'Compulsive' means things compelled. White seems to regard obligative as associated more with internal ideas or affairs of one's own (1761: 246), while he describes compulsive as more external: 'The Signs here always import Necessity of a Natural, Moral, Social, or Political kind' (1761: 249).

the Necessity of a Thing to be done by *must* or *ought*, *shall* or *should*.

(Greenwood 1711: 119, emphasis added)

- (58) *Shall*: declares an intention in the first person; implies a permission, a promise, or a threat in the second and third persons.

*Will*: implies a promise in the first person; declares the speaker's anticipation of the future in the second and third persons.

*Would*: a) past willingness, b) past determination, c) future, following a past tense *He said it would rain*

*Should*: a) duty (ought to), b) contingency if *he should arrive*, c) future, following a past time, d) modest expression of opinion *I should say you paid too much*

*May*: implies a) liberty, b) possibility, c) purpose 'I read, that I may obtain useful knowledge'

*Might*: is substituted for *may*, if a past tense precede

*Can*: signifies power

*Could*: a) is the past tense of *can*, b) It may express future conditional power, c) also conditionally, where it is implied that the consequence does not exist, because the condition does not, *I should be glad if I could speak English*

(based on Ballantyne 1847: 12-3, emphasis added)

Words which are critical for an understanding of the meaning of the modals have been underlined. While these functional definitions are exemplified from just two of the grammars from my corpus, many of the grammar books have similar, and sometimes the same definitions.

Ballantyne's analysis includes several different meanings for each of the modal words: we can see that there are modals whose meanings are composed of

different conceptualizations or perspectives. For example, the ‘future’ sense of *would* results from the rule of the sequence of tenses in reported speech, which reflects formal factors, while the other senses ‘willingness’ and ‘determination’ denote the more general or basic semantics of this modal. ‘Basic’ here means associated with the more original semantic sense of *will*, which denotes intention or volition. However, all the three modal senses: ‘future’, ‘willingness’ and ‘determination’ reflect aspects of the original meaning: ‘intention’ or ‘volition’ of *will* is clearly non-present, as noted in section 2.5.1 above, while ‘willingness’ and ‘determination’ reflect some (human) agency on the part of the subject.

Some parts of Ballantyne’s definitions of each modal clearly relate to pragmatic context. The fact that one of the senses of *should*, for instance, is defined using an adjective such as ‘modest’ illustrates that the meaning of the modals is to some degree pragmatically determined. This is slightly different from sense (a) ‘duty’ (see above) which seems to represent a more general semantic perspective. In sum, Ballantyne’s classification of the meaning of the modals forms a complex structure of grammatical pattern, lexical meaning and pragmatic context. This suggests that some grammarians recognised that it is often necessary to refer to context to understand the meaning of the modals.

The dynamic, evolving association of semantic and pragmatic senses can also be noticed in other grammatical descriptions in that period. For example, Ramsay discusses the issue of the meaning of the modals, showing, first, their semantic development. He notes that the meaning of *may* has evolved from “have power” to marking possibility, and that of *will* from “intention” to marking futurity (Ramsay 1892: 373-5). He defines the use of *shall* as follows:

(59) II. *Shall* is a word of authority and command. It expresses no sense of duty.

III. *Shall* is properly used only by the power that can enforce it.

‘I have no right to say that a felon *shall* be hanged.’

IV. Hence *shall* is a harsh word, and at best requires a deal of sweetening.

So, instead of saying "You *shall*, persons in authority are now much in the habit of saying "You *will please*," ...

(Ramsay 1892: 390)

- (60) VIII. ...; *shall* is used where the result is indifferent or undesirable.

(Ramsay 1892: 393)

- (61) X. We... 'demand, order, require, provide,' that it *shall* be. Thus...; the intentional exercise of power or authority over another by *shall*.

(Ramsay 1892: 394)

On the other hand, Ramsay also suggests that 'I *shall*' is 'less explicit' 'self-asserting', so that, it is more modest than "I *will*" (Ramsay 1892: 391, example (48) in this chapter). These suggested senses are difficult to understand without some background context: again, we can see the interplay of semantic and pragmatic factors in our understanding of a modal expression. On *should* and *would*, Ramsay notes:

- (62) "It *should* seem"

We all understand the word *seem* in its two shades of meaning; appearing and presenting a false appearance.

But in our great fondness for a display of **modesty** we sometimes say hesitatingly: "It *would* seem"

This might consistently enough have a meaning, which would be: "Granting certain conditions, it would then seem"

But this is not what people mean by the phrase, but something like this: "I beg pardon ten thousand times for venturing to intimate that possibly it seems."

Still, what is meant by, "It *should* seem," and wherein does it differ from "It would seem"?

According to the proper signification of the words the meaning should be: "It *ought* to seem, but does not."

Beyond that I am unable to extract from it any semblance of sense.

(Ramsay 1892: 399, emphasis added)

The information above provided by the grammarians suggests that the sense of politeness does not belong restrictedly, exclusively, and absolutely to a single modal term. Instead, we should understand that the polite sense is established partially through contexts and situations of the expression (cf. Papafragou 2000). A single modal term should be regarded as one of the factors which make us recognize the sense of the utterance as a whole, although the single factor or the existence of the modal is undeniably important. All in all, as described in previous sections, it is possible to notice that the grammarians recognised a certain system which establishes connections between different kinds of meaning from more semantic to more pragmatic, in a network. This is explored in more detail in chapter 5.

### **2.5.3 Issues of modal pragmatics in Late Modern English grammars**

#### **2.5.3.1 Conditionality and the modals**

Conditionality is described by several grammarians when they discuss the meaning of modal auxiliary verbs. Sutcliffe (1815: 136), for instance, suggests that the preterit forms of the modals: *might*, *could*, *would*, and *should* mark the English "conditional (tense)", an analysis proposed earlier by Lowth. Lowth (1762: 61)

notes that when in an expression the copula is modified by modal auxiliary verbs, the sentence is said to be a “Modal Proposition”. He informs us that modal meanings may be divided into two different conceptualizations, namely, “absolute” or “conditional” (Lowth 1762: 62). These two concepts are applied commonly to modals and are denoted by the present or preterit forms of the modals respectively, as follows:

(63)

- The ‘Possibility’ of a thing depends upon the power of its cause; and may be expressed when {Absolute / Conditional} by the Particle {*Can / Could*}.
- The ‘Liberty’ of a thing depends upon a freedom from all obstacles either within or without, and is usually expressed in our language when {Absolute / Conditional} by the Particle {*May / Might*}.
- The ‘Inclination of the Will’ is expressed, if {Absolute / Conditional} by the Particle {*Will / Would*}.
- The Necessity of a thing from some ‘external Obligation’, whether ‘Natural’, or ‘Moral’, which we call Duty, is expressed, if {Absolute / Conditional} by the Particle {*Must, Ought, Shall / Must, Ought, Should*}.

(Lowth 1762: 62)

The distinction between absolute and conditional is also taken up by Webster (1784). He suggests the following are well-formed:

(64) **Absolute**

Potential

“I can write,

Indicative

but I will not.”

**Doubtful**Potential

"I can write,

Subjunctive

if I 'please' or if I 'have' a pen."

**Conditional**Potential

"I could write, if I 'had' a pen or if I 'pleased'."

"I could write, if I would."

(extracted from Webster 1784: 31)

Webster discusses three categories: tense, mood and word form. Within the category of tense, he distinguishes three terms 'absolute', 'doubtful' and 'conditional'; within the category of mood, he also identifies three terms 'potential & indicative' and 'subjunctive'. As for the matter of word form, 'present' and 'preterit' forms are introduced. The combination of 'potential and indicative' moods with the 'present' form of the modal auxiliary verb is regarded as 'absolute tense'. Here, with the absolute, we have two conjoined main clauses; with 'doubtful' and 'conditional', the subjunctive mood appears in the protasis (the subordinate clause introduced by *if*), and the potential in the apodosis. The only thing that distinguishes the doubtful from the conditional is whether a preterit form of the verb is used. Webster argues that "the subjunctive mode, is always dependent either on some conjugation or some preceding verb" (1784: 31). Usually, the grammarians' use of the word 'tense' refers to time, or more specifically, the grammaticalization of time. However, what the tenses represent here, are epistemic states: 'absolute', 'doubtful' and 'conditional'.

According to Webster, the expressions below are ill-formed because the absolute – conditional combinatorial orders in an expression are not coherent.

(65) \*"I can write, but I would not." (absolute → conditional)

\*"I can write, if I pleased." (absolute ← conditional)

\*"I could write, if I please." (conditional ← absolute)

(extracted from Webster 1784: 32)



However, when a conditional (subjunctive) clause comes first and an absolute (indicative) clause follows (conditional → absolute), the expression is considered acceptable. This is because the first conditional expression masks a hidden conditional (subjunctive) clause, and the conditional – conditional combination is regarded as well-formed when followed by an absolute (indicative) clause. Webster explains:

- (66) It is true we say, “I could write, but I will not”  
 here is a condition implied: viz. “I could write ‘if I  
 pleased’; but I will not.”

(Webster 1784: 32)

As far as Webster’s description is concerned, it looks as though he tries to establish the distinction between absoluteness and conditionality depending on the verb form. However, a simpler analysis is possible, as suggested above. Some of his views were nonetheless shared with others such as Lowth (1762) and Sutcliffe (1815) who also use the concept ‘conditional tense’ when discussing the modals.

### **2.5.3.2 Politeness, usage and correctness**

My analysis of the treatment of the modal auxiliary verb in LModE grammars suggests that the grammarians saw semantic and pragmatic senses as forming a network, an idea which I develop in chapter 5. Some parts of the meaning of the modal auxiliary verb relate to the earlier semantics of the principal verb from which it derived. We have also seen that the modal auxiliary verb possesses other meanings which can be deduced from contextual information. This section looks at the descriptions in the grammar books which relate the sense of the modals explicitly to politeness, which also needs to be considered in a social and/or discourse context.

First, I illustrate the descriptions by some grammarians who noted the relationship between modal verb usage and politeness.

- (67) *should, would*: ..., **modestly** declare a fact, ...  
*should*, in the second and third persons, express 'duty', and the idea of the author was, to express an event, under a condition, or a **modest** declaration; 'he *should* have used *would*'  
 (Webster 1789: 239; emphasis added)
- (68) A slight assertion, with **modest** diffidence, is sometimes made by the help of *should*; 'I *should* think', for 'I am rather inclined to think.'  
 In the following examples it is elegantly redundant:  
 'I *should* advice you to proceed'; 'I *should* think it would succeed';  
 'he, it *should* seem, thinks otherwise.'  
 (Smith 1816: 63; emphasis added)
- (69) *Should* may imply... **modest** expression of opinion  
*I should say you paid too much.*  
 (extracted from Ballantyne 1847: 13; emphasis added)

In such examples, *should* and *would* are introduced as the words which express modesty. Especially, the connection of modesty with *should* looks quite strong. However, this does not necessarily mean that only these two modals are used to express propositions 'modestly'. Consider, for instance, the following examples:

- (70) Sometimes that form of the auxiliary verbs *shall, will &c.* which is generally conditional, is elegantly used to express a very slight assertion, with a **modest** diffidence.

"I *should* think it *would* be proper to give up the point;" that is,  
 "I am rather inclined to think"

(Murray 1808: 136-7, emphasis added)

In this example, 'auxiliary verbs' as a category are clearly connected to modesty in a broad sense, suggesting that modal auxiliary verbs as a whole, including both the present and preterit forms, have a certain relation to modest or polite expressions. In addition, it is possible to say that senses such as 'conditionality', 'elegancy' and 'diffidence' have some connection to the use of modal verbs, from the definitions provided above. Expressions such as 'modesty', 'elegancy', and 'diffidence' were also of primary concern to those writing (and reading) manner and etiquette books at that period. More discussion of these issues can be found in chapters 3 and 4.

As for conditionality, it is rare to see a description which connects this verbal expression directly to politeness in manner or etiquette books. Nevertheless, a similar or at least associated concept 'hypotheticality' is related to modesty (Sweet 1903: 113).

- (71) The consequence-clause of conditional sentences is often used absolutely with a variety of meanings.

It is so used to express a modest wish, request, or question, some such hypothetical clause as 'if it were possible,' 'if you will allow me – give me' being understood:

*I should like a glass of water.*

*wouldn't you rather have a cup of tea? |*

*he says he would like to go for a walk.*

*I should like to go to too.*

(Sweet 1903: 113)

Further examples of the association between modal verbs and politeness in the grammar books of the period include:

- (72) **Should**: denoting time; implies doubt; **politely** marks the event as involuntary or accidental.

(extracted from White 1761: 231, emphasis added)

- (73) **May** is **elegantly** used in asking a question, to **soften** the boldness of an inquiry: 'How old *may* you be?'

(Angus 1812: 70; emphasis added)

- (74) **Should**: the assertion of 'duty' or obligation is one of those assertions which men like to **soften** in the expression; So is the expression of 'power', as denoted by *may* or *can* – *might, could*.

(Latham 1841: 502; emphasis added)

- (75) ...**will**, in addressing a person, which represents a **courteous** form of the imperative. In conveying official instructions to a subordinate officer – "you *will* see that proper precautions are taken," means, in fact, 'I direct you to see' etc.

This is, I conceive, simply the use of the future for the imperative; inasmuch as the superior assumes that the party addressed will do that which is his duty, and he foretells what that will be, instead of ordering him to do.

(Head 1856: 26; emphasis added)

We can see from data such as these that the sense of politeness is broadly related to a variety of expressions and senses.

Next, the concept of 'correct(ness)' was also influential in the Late Modern English period as a reflection of the social current of the time (see chapter 1). We can see that 'correct' forms are related to polite sense. There appear certain mutual connections between the linguistic issues and concepts which emerged in correlation

with the social ideals such as standardisation, educatedness, properness, normativeness, and gentility. Therefore, things seen as 'correct' were praised and valued among the higher social classes. As a result, texts which indicate 'proper' applications of language became a social need, since correct language was connected to certain behaviour, and as a result could mark the status of the speaker. There are many authors who helped the reader to identify what was wrong and what was right regarding language. Some examples which identify the 'correct' use of the modal auxiliary verb are provided below.

(76) Examples:

**may** (wrong) → **must** (right)

Give an account of thy stewardship; for thou *mayst* be no longer steward.

(Dauson, B. (1797). *Prolepsis philology anglicanæ*; or , plan of a philological and synonymical dictionary of the English language. Ipswich: 16.)

**might** → **could**

And that in wholesome wisdom, he *might* not but refuse you.

(Fell, J. (1784). *An essay towards an English grammar*. London: 180.)

**might** → **should**

when it pleased God to reveal his Son in me, that I *might* preach him among the heathen, I conferred not

(Fell 1874: 173)

**must** → **can**

He is so strong that he *must* carry near four hundred weight.

(Fogg, P. W. (1792/96). *Elementa Anglicana*; or, the principles of English grammar displayed and exemplified, in a method entirely new. 2vols. Stockport: 1: 160 / 2: 76)

**must** → **might**

*Must* it not be expected that the King would defend his authority?

(Bieknell, A. (1790). *The grammatical wreath; or a complete system of English grammar*; being a selection of the most instructive rules from all the principal English grammars. In two parts. London. 2: 80)

***shall* → *may* / *must***

*Shall* I or he go?

(Fogg 1796. 2:76)

***will* → *may***

Be that as it *will*.

(Baker, R. (1779). *Remarks on the English language*, in the manner of those of Vaugelas on the French: being a detection of many others to be found in authors. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: 72)

***would* → *may***

For this cause I bow my knee unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ that he *would* grant you according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might, by his spirit, in the inner man.

(Mennye, J. (1785). *An English Grammar*; being a compilation from the works of such grammarians as have acquired the approbation of the public. New York: 88)

(extracted from Sundby *et al.* 1991:211)

With these examples, it is possible to recognise that the grammar books at that moment were not only fairly prescriptive and indeed proscriptive, but also they illustrate the relationship between social factors and language use.

## 2.6 Summary of chapter 2

Section 2.1 discussed the background of the publication of the grammar book in the Late Modern English period, which grew in popularity as a result of the influence of social demand – some members of society wanted something which guided the reader to learn ‘proper’ language. While there existed two types of grammar books, one set more universal, and one more specifically English-based, both seemed to share the same form-oriented description. There remained some impact from classical languages such as Latin in the analysis of English grammar.

Section 2.2 dealt with the description pattern of the grammar book. ‘Mood’ and ‘tense’ were parts of the typical form-based, prescriptive style which seemed to be the standard format of the grammar book during that period. However, notwithstanding such a conventional description style, there were some differences regarding the categorisations of mood and tense. In addition, there were indications which suggested the outdated nature of the inflection based categorisation of mood in English. The part which relates to modal senses showed even more differences between the authors. It seems that the differences of the individual conceptualisations in terms of mood and tense were the cause.

Section 2.3 introduced how mood and modality has been depicted since the Late Modern English period. One of the important points associated with the concept of mood was the speaker’s subjective view or thought. However, this brings into question the usefulness of a purely form-based categorisation. The concept of modality was established as a linguistic phenomenon centred on meaning. In this conceptualisation there exist several interactions and interferences between related factors of form and function in language (Bybee and Fleischman 1995: 2). This is primarily associated with contemporary analyses; however, it is also possible to witness certain descriptions in the earlier references from the Late Modern English period which are suggestive of a similar theoretical position regarding modal sense and the modal auxiliary verb, and their relation. (e.g. the descriptions of (counter)factualty in Sweet 1990, 1903; Maetzner 1874). The point is that more



pragmatic based concepts are discussed in interpretation of the modal auxiliary verb, in addition to more semantic based ones.

In section 2.4, the classification of auxiliary verbs in Late Modern English grammars was discussed. This raised many issues regarding the characteristics of each of the modal auxiliary verbs. Consequently, this suggests there exists a certain extensive network within which possible conceptual factors are located having the potential to be linked to each other, depending on situation and context. The dynamic nature of this conceptualisation or meaning-making also seems to indicate a part of the grammaticalization process.

Section 2.5 observed more about the semantic – pragmatic continuum associated with the meanings of the modal auxiliary verbs. Politeness was seen as a factor here, and this is the main topic of following chapter.

### **Chapter 3. Historical Attitude towards politeness**

In the previous chapter, we established certain senses of politeness as a property of the modal auxiliary verb. This chapter discusses the issue of politeness in more detail, particularly in relation to late Modern English (LModE) society and culture. In section 3.1, I look at different meanings of politeness, suggesting that there are two broad categories regarding the historic conceptualisation of politeness based on descriptions in the LModE period (as established in chapter 1). These dual aspects of politeness are introduced sometimes referring also to information from Present-Day English, which lends further weight to the existence of these binary aspects. The chapter also includes a reconsideration of face theory which is taken up in the conceptualisation of politeness (section 3.2). This leads to a further discussion regarding the two aspects of the conceptualisation of politeness. Although theoretically the two co-exist equally, it seems that one of them (variable, learned, social) is strongly influential, possibly almost dominant, in our actual conceptualisation (cf. Hudson 2007: 232-233). I conclude by showing how this relates to particular models of politeness in LModE.

#### **3.1 The meaning of politeness**

As suggested at the end of the previous chapter, in LModE, some grammarians (e.g. Webster 1789, Smith 1816, Ramsay 1892) correlate a sense of 'modesty' with some uses of modals. This is related to another much wider ideological frame: politeness. While the issue of politeness is one of the main themes of this thesis, I would like to explore the grammarians' use of the word 'modesty' as a means of introduction to the main issue. Consider, in this regard, the

use of *should* and *would* in the following examples, where they are introduced as words which express modesty.

- (1) *should*<sup>16</sup>, *would*: ..., **modestly** declare a fact, ...  
*should*, in the second and third persons, express 'duty', and  
 the idea of the author was, to express an event, under a  
condition<sup>17</sup>, or a **modest** declaration; 'he *should* have used  
*would*'

(Webster 1789: 239, emphasis added)

- (2) A slight assertion, with **modest** diffidence, is sometimes made  
 by the help of *should*; 'I *should* think', for I am rather  
 inclined to think.'

In the following examples it is elegantly redundant:

'I *should* advice you to proceed'; 'I *should* think it would  
 succeed'; 'he, it *should* seem, thinks otherwise.'

(Smith 1816: 63, emphasis added)

- (3) *Should* may imply... **modest** expression of opinion  
 I *should* say you paid too much.

(Ballantyne 1847: 13, emphasis added)

I do not suggest that only these two modals express propositions 'modestly', although modesty looks to be quite strongly linked with *should*, in as far as the examples above are typical of many comments on the use of *should* in LModE grammars. Consider, for instance, the following example:

<sup>16</sup> Boldfaced letters indicate the words which show a direct mutual relation between the modal auxiliary verb and polite-related sense.

<sup>17</sup> Underlined letters indicate the words which show a secondary related senses to the primary forms noted in footnote 14.

- (4) Sometimes that form of the auxiliary verbs *shall, will &c.* which is generally conditional, is elegantly used to express a very slight assertion, with a **modest** diffidence.

“I *should* think it *would* be proper to give up the point;” that is,  
“I am rather inclined to think”

(Murray 1808: 136-7, emphasis added)

In addition, it is possible to suggest that senses such as ‘conditionality’, ‘elegancy’, ‘diffidence’ and ‘inclination’ have some connection to modesty from the explanations above (as indicated by the underlined parts in the examples above). Expressions which are represented by senses such as ‘modesty’, ‘elegancy’, ‘civility’ and ‘diffidence’, etc. were also of primary concern to those writing (and reading) manner and etiquette books at that period as well as to those who were concerned about the ‘purity’ of English more generally.

- (5) Modesty is a polite accomplishment, and generally an attendant upon merit. It is engaging to the highest degree, and wins the hearts of all our acquaintance.

The man who is, on all occasions, commending and speaking well of himself, we naturally dislike. On the other hand, he who studies to cancel his own desert, who does justice to the merit of others, who talks but little of himself, and that with modesty, makes a favourable impression on the person he is conversing with, captivates their minds, and gains their esteem.

Instead of becoming insolent, a man of sense, under a consciousness of merit, is more modest.

(Anon 1813?<sup>18</sup>, page: 205)

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<sup>18</sup> There is a handwritten description which says that the book was donated to a person in ‘1813’. This is the same book as the example of (29) in chapter 1, section 1.3.1.

- (6) To write well and correct, and in a pleasing stile, is another part of polite education. As to the correctness and elegance of your writing, attention to grammar does the one, and to the best authors, the other.

(Anon 1813?<sup>19</sup>, page: 209)

- (7) So then, to compleat our selves in true 'Politeness', we need go no farther than the Rules of Civility; and that Civility being nothing but a certain Modesty and courteous Disposition which is to accompany us in all our Actions, we could not more usefully discourse of any other Virtue, (suppose we are able) considering this directs us to the acquisition of a thing, that conciliates Applause, and the Affection of the whole World.

(Anon 1703: 3)

- (8) On Politeness, Civility, and Gratitude; their essential qualities enumerated; and the Practice of them strongly recommended.

(Murry 1778: 35)

- (9) There are very few improper, if they are presented with modest diffidence, and in deference to superior judgment.

(Murry 1778: 36)

It is not uncommon to find this kind of description in late Modern English guides to good manners. (e.g. Knox 1784, Anon 1811, Vandenhoff 1862). It may be said that suggestions and pieces of advice like these were a kind of customary, typical set of observations which were provided in the usage manuals at that time. As a result, it is estimated that such guidance was frequently sought by readers of the period, concerned with 'correct' behaviour. Daniel Defoe in his *An Essay upon Projects*

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<sup>19</sup> This quotation comes from the same text as that in example (5) above.

(1697) linked politeness with correctness as follows: he suggested the purpose of an academy would be

- (10) ... to encourage polite learning, to polish and refine the English tongue, and advance the so much neglected faculty of correct language, to establish purity and propriety of style...

(Defoe: 1697: 233)

As Watts (2002: 162) observes:

- (11) the eighteenth century ideology of politeness was composed of the following values: decorum, grace, beauty, symmetry and order. These values were transformed into the social symbols for membership in the class of the gentry that the upwardly mobile emergent middle classes eagerly sought to attain. In a word, they became features of the legitimate language, 'standard English'.

(Watts 2002: 162)

This suggestion - that 'politeness' is connected with values which emerge in eighteenth century society - suggests that 'decorum' and 'grace' were indices of a particular aspect of culture which influenced the development of the ideology of 'standard English'. The following quotation, discussing Anthony Ashley Cooper, the third earl of Shaftesbury, neatly sums up attitudes to cultural politeness in the period:

- (12) Shaftesbury's cultural history was concerned to demonstrate the association of liberty and politeness and thus constituted, in the first place, an elaboration of the theme of Liberty and Arts and Letters. Politeness was the sum of cultural artefacts, but it was also manners, the patterns of behaviour expressive of a people's deepest moral nature.

The perspective of these three citations from Defoe, Watts and Klein is perhaps more sociological than linguistic. However, in the sociological perspective regarding politeness, it is obvious that language is closely intertwined with polite behaviour. Such a view is manifest in the following example from the American Hugh Jones's *An Accidence to the English Tongue* (Jones 1724: 62, 65):

- (13) We should aim at an elegant and fluent Style; gliding like a smooth River, and not running violently like a rapid Torrent. Our language affords us Choice of Words, and Variety of Expression; in which we should imitate the Learned and Polite, the Correct and Pure, without jingling Terms, harsh or obsolete, vulgar or unbecoming Words, ungrateful to the Ear, difficult in Sound, or offensive to Modesty, good Manners, or good Sense.

(Jones 1724: 62)

- (14) So that good Manners, correct Writing, proper English, and a smooth Tongue, are requisite Qualifications, sufficient to render a Person (of but tolerable good Endowments) completely accomplished for Conversation.

(Jones 1724: 65)

As Jones notes, the place of the “accomplished” (or in Watts’ interpretation of it, the “gentry”, Watts 2002: 165) in determining (or at least heavily influencing) polite behaviour was central: the other lower classes, especially the flourishing and influential middle class, in other words, the increasingly mobile sector of society, sought to copy such behaviour. The rapidly flourishing middle class in eighteenth century Britain tended to have an ambition to join the polite world (Watts 2002: 167).



In this context, language, as one of the representative means of indicating polite status, was easy or at least available for many to access.

Linguistic usage which represented or was related to politeness was typically regarded as a property of the aristocrats in LModE, as historical descriptions show (see also chapter 1). For example, Lord Chesterfield's *Letters To His Son* (cf. Stanhope 1824, 1959) was taken up as a guide for the middle class to pursue in order to acquire the 'moral state' of the people in the upper ranks (Morgan: 1994: 1). Indeed, the author told of the importance of possessing "manners, good-breeding, and the graces" to his son in the letter on December 30<sup>th</sup> in 1748 (Stanhope 1824: 6). It is quite obvious that the message was meant to be regarded as markers of the properties of their own (high-status) society. While the ideals which relate to politeness had encouraged people to think that the better states were the objects which could improve their morale and contributed to progress the development of the society, the evolution of society had also nurtured and encouraged the notion of politeness. Both of them interacted and progressed, working as a kind of mutual aid. However, these societal and cultural factors were not the only components of politeness. Partridge (1963: 25-26) suggests that politeness is not just cultural but that it also depends on the manners and tastes which the speaker individually possess. Klein (1994a: 3-4) also notes that the word 'politeness', while in vogue at that time, covered a more profound and wide range of meanings. Like Partridge, Klein also suggests that politeness is situated in the socialised world: he enumerates several words as formal descriptions of qualities of politeness in the later seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century England:

- (15) To say that "politeness" was proper form is to say there were qualities of form that described it...  
 ... "easy", "free", "natural", "elegant", "fine", "nice",  
 "genteel", "simple", "good-natured", "well-bred", "polished",  
 "refined", "just", "fresh", "clean", "open".

(Klein 1983: 30)

As far as these 'qualities' of politeness are concerned, I suggest that they can be divided into two categories: humanity-based and innate (what I will call 'universal'-based) vs. socially and culturally specific, and learned (what I will call 'variable'-based). For example, words such as 'easy', 'natural', 'simple', and 'fresh' possibly sound more innate, i.e. universal, while 'elegant', 'nice', 'genteel', 'good-natured', 'well-bred' 'polished' and 'refined' seem to be concepts which emerge only when learned in a society, i.e. variable. As for the former 'universal' group, the factors seem to be ones for whom people's attitudes and evaluation are relatively generally more favourable, and unified across cultures, compared to the latter, although there are bound to be some differences of opinion among individuals. While both of these aspects (universal and variable) seem to have existed as influential factors for our understanding of politeness during the LModE period, it is said that the relative balance between them is weighted in favour of the variable-based ones. Klein (1994a: 4) indicates such an aspect of socialization as the property of 'politeness' in the LModE period, and Watts (2002) implies that 'politeness' does change its conceptualization depending on times and societies:

- (16) the concept of politeness shifted ground towards the end of the nineteenth century to refer to social behaviour displaying mutually shared forms of consideration for others

(Watts 2002:168)

This seems to support and strengthen the idea that people's notion of 'politeness' (or at least social-based politeness) has a dynamically evolving nature which is affected by several related factors. Since the indication of the two aspects of politeness has been raised, I will discuss both universal and variable aspects of politeness in the next sections.

### 3.1.1 Two aspects of politeness: universal and variable

Politeness as a universal is a mainstay of the politeness theory introduced by Brown and Levinson (1987). In outlining aspects of that theory, I begin with Goffman's notion of face, which Brown and Levinson use as a key term. Goffman (1955: 213) defines "face" as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line<sup>20</sup> others assume he has taken during a particular contact". 'Face' is something which each individual possesses as in image of self not only subjectively, but also objectively, through his / her social life. This is because while each person defines his / her own ideas regarding people's 'faces', the sources on which the person relies as standards when he / she conceives of the idea of 'face' will unavoidably reflect the circumstance of his / her life, and the lives of everyone who lives in the same community, sharing the same culture. Goffman argues that 'face-work' reflects peoples' cultural (including linguistic) behaviour. Sometimes it involves protecting face and sometimes threatening face: 'If events establish a face for [a speaker: HO] that is better than he might have expected, he is likely to "feel good"; if his ordinary expectations are not fulfilled, one expects that he will "feel bad".' (Goffman 1955: 213)

Cutting (2002: 45) redefines 'face' as "the public self-image, the sense of self, of the people that we address." My observation above agrees with his perspective. This image can be commonly understood among people, at least those from the same culture. As far as Brown and Levinson's explanation goes, although the formation of the particular image is influenced differently depending on cultures, the general character can commonly, by and large, be recognized across cultures. The notable thing is that there exists a universal aspect of human behaviour such that speakers respect each others' self image and they try to avoid damaging it. Therefore, the speaker normally refrains from committing "face threatening acts (FTAs)" (Brown and Levinson 1987: 25) by using either positive or negative politeness strategies.

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<sup>20</sup> Goffman defines 'line' as "a pattern of verbal and nonverbal acts by which he expresses his view of the situation and through this his evaluation of the participants, especially himself" (Goffman 1955: 213)

Many studies and arguments have followed and/or refer to Brown and Levinson's theory (e.g. Ide 1989, Azuma 1994, Thomas 1995, Usami 2002). A central part of their theory is to measure the state of politeness by adopting the concepts of "positive" and "negative" politeness (Brown and Levinson 1987: 2, 17). Positive politeness is applied to behaviours which raise face more directly. To cajole and to agree with someone are examples of positive politeness, which serves to shorten the social distance and strengthen the solidarity between the speaker and the hearer. Negative politeness is applied to behaviours which also raise face, but more indirectly and moderately.

Thomas (1995) implies that face-work must be a principle, rather than a rule. This means that it might not apply absolutely and invariantly, but will tend to apply with some exceptions, depending on situations. This does not contradict Brown and Levinson's view; in fact, they also imply this point of view, for instance in not assuming an absolute order to their politeness strategies. Thomas argues that:

(17)-a (i) is more likely to be judged as 'polite' than (ii) or (iii):

(i) I'm afraid I must ask you to leave.

(ii) Go away!

(iii) Bugger off!

But she adds:

(17)-b Whether the utterer of (i) is more motivated by consideration for the hearer than the utterer of (iii), and whether (i) is less hurtful for the hearer than (iii) is debatable.

(Thomas 1995: 157)

This is because the judgment depends on situations or contexts. In fact, if the speaker and the hearer are in a very close relation like a husband and a wife, (i) might sound too stiff and standoffish, and make the other feel confused. Similarly,

even words such as 'please' and 'congratulations' mark politeness only in context: the polite image of these words can be changed when, for instance, someone says 'Congratulations!' in a sarcastic manner; this can be face-threatening. The point is that a single word - even one that is typically seen as 'polite' - has the potential to be interpreted both positively and negatively, that is, face-raising and face threatening. Therefore, it seems to be difficult to say that factors which raise face or threaten face are inherent in a single word. The lexical semantic meanings of the words 'congratulations' and 'please' are inherently positive. Despite this, they can threaten face depending on circumstances.

There is another argument which suggests the importance of having a broad perspective to consider linguistic expression regarding politeness. Usami (2002: no. ⑥) values Brown and Levinson's theory as one which contributed to the notion that politeness is more likely to be the issue of how our expression works comprehensively, rather than just the issue of lexical single words or sentences. In other words, it might be said that politeness is lodged in an expression (utterance) as a whole. It seems that she agrees with the validity of their theory in the matter of the universal applicability to humans' sense or conceptualisation of politeness. However, Usami points out there are other factors which affect our understanding of politeness. They are ① language use which follows sociolinguistic norms and customs, ② language use which reflects the speaker's individual and idiosyncratic politeness strategy and ③ the mutual effects of both ① and ②. As a result, the aspect of "discourse", a broader concept than 'utterance', is required. (Usami 2002 no.⑥: 98)

For example, the situation "discourse which is exchanged by adults at their first meeting" or "discourse which is exchanged by close friends in their twenties" is identified as a unit of "activity type". (translated from Usami 2002 no.⑥: 99)

Politeness strategies can be observed based on such an activity type. Therefore, it can be said that this perspective is quite pragmatically oriented. However, as is well known, the dividing line between semantics and pragmatics may be hard to draw.

The following example seems to show the grey area between semantic and pragmatic perspectives in terms of the study of politeness expression.

Kashino (2002) tried to identify which modal auxiliary verbs are appropriate to express certain sentences to certain people in certain discourse contexts. He compared the appropriateness (degrees of preference) of four modalizing phrases by sending questionnaires to native speakers. In the questions, four persons (a friend, a stranger, a witness, and a secretary) are provided as an (imaginary) listener. Kashino tried to ascertain which phrases are preferred depending on the imaginary audience, and the results reveal very different choices depending on this factor. The questions provided and the results of his study are as follows:

(18) Questionnaire

- (a) \_\_\_\_\_ you do me a favour? (to a friend)
- (b) Excuse me, but \_\_\_\_\_ you tell me the way to the station?  
(to a stranger)
- (c) \_\_\_\_\_ you tell the court your occupation, please? (to a witness)
- (d) \_\_\_\_\_ you type this letter, please? (to secretary)

Results (no answer, multiple choices included)

	<i>WILL</i>	<i>CAN</i>	<i>WOULD</i>	<i>COULD</i>
(a)	13%	20%	23%	44%
(b)	4%	36%	14%	46%
(c)	33%	4%	56%	7%
(d)	18%	15%	38%	29%

(based on Kashino 2002: 102)

The results suggest that there are tendencies for people to adopt certain modal auxiliary verbs depending on the imagined addressee; nevertheless, there is substantial variation in each case. Although the situations of the questions seem defined to a certain extent (e.g. the limited set of imagined addressees, and the



limited set of auxiliary verbs from which the informant can select), there appears to be a variety of further potential different contexts with these questions, not controlled by the experiment, for example, how the informant might perceive the relationship with such an addressee, or whether the imagined discourse takes place where there is someone else who can hear the conversation, etc. Kashino argues that privateness, casualness and friendliness have more importance than formality on the one hand to a friend, while on the other, formality is thought to be valued higher and to be more appropriate to a witness. Although Kashino may try to distinguish and establish a binary system between friendliness and formality, it is unavoidable to see that such factors are not sharply separated, but coexist to different degrees in the same utterance. As Cutting (2002: 51) suggests, "One utterance can contain both positive and negative politeness".

While the universal aspect of politeness is clearly warranted, there emerge some 'grey' issues such as the distinctions and relations between semantic – pragmatic factors, and between positive and negative politeness. A certain diversity is suggested, related to other factors, influential in particular languages and cultures. The next section discusses this aspect.

### **3.1.2 Politeness: a variable perspective**

In a different vein, Cutting (2002: 52) provides a definition of three varieties of context relevant to the study of politeness: situational, social, and cultural. Situational context is divided into two factors: (1) the size of imposition and (2) the formality (of the discourse). A significant imposition and formal discourse encourage people to adopt 'indirect' expressions. Social context is also divided into two factors: (1) distance and (2) power relation. Social distance and an asymmetric power relation promote the adoption of indirect expressions and negative politeness strategies such as hedges and mitigations. Cultural context is based on custom or common knowledge which is valid only within that social area where people share the same culture. Since customs and habits are often different not only between countries, but also across regions, ages, genders, and times, cultural context consists



of complicated amalgamations which are said to lead directly to different manifestations of the indirect use of language (cf. Tannen 1994: 32-34).

Cutting also calls attention to the way in which people deal with the contexts and language use.

- (19) the relationship between indirectness and social variables is not so simple: the whole issue of politeness and language is exceedingly culture-bound

(Cutting 2002: 53).

The problem is, he suggests, that we cannot make sweeping generalizations regarding language and the expression of politeness. Both Cutting and Thomas highlight several examples of gaps between countries which result from the different understandings of their senses of values, as follows:

- (20) a polite Chinese host will choose your dishes for you in a restaurant without consulting you (and will often go so far as to place the choicest pieces directly onto your plate), so the linguistic expression of optionality in, say, inviting someone to one's home, is not seen as polite.

(Thomas 1995: 161)

- (21) The British reject praise in the form of a personal compliment, 'minimising praise of self', whereas the Japanese accept a compliment graciously.

(Cutting 2002: 54)

While one culture may give weight to positive politeness, another culture may attach greater importance to negative politeness strategies as a means of being 'properly' polite. Different considerations connect to different understandings of politeness. In Cutting's comparison between English and Japanese cultures, it is

clear that one culture regards the expressions of personal compliments as unwelcome or unnecessary; while the other thinks the exchange of such compliments is natural and good. Furthermore, Cutting explains that influential factors in the notion of politeness, from the context, include the language used, the nature of the speech acts, the structure of the conversation, and the Gricean principles of cooperation (Cutting 2002: 54). This thesis has already pointed out that analysis of politeness must make reference to both linguistic and extra-linguistic factors. Now we can also see that it is important to view politeness as a more dynamic issue. The factors which are proposed by Cutting are not static, and are always in flux as speakers make use of the linguistic resources available to them. Therefore, a full understanding of politeness requires us to appreciate language use, which is ever-changing, constructed and created by and based on human interaction.

Nakau (1994: 34) argues that this extra-linguistic context involves a variety of factors, such as personal belief, encyclopaedic knowledge, shared ideas in a society, and common sense. Such extra-linguistic factors are commonly called pragmatic knowledge (Nakau 1994: 35), and nowadays, as argued in section 3.1.1 above, politeness is regularly recognised as an issue of pragmatics (Leech 1983, Brown and Levinson 1987). In the LModE period of course, this notion had not been widely established. Grammar books, as noted in chapter 2, were primarily concerned with the establishment of a set of grammatical norms, not pragmatics. Therefore, the word 'politeness' appeared infrequently in these books. Although other related terms such as 'elegant', 'gentle', and 'modest' language can be observed, they possibly represent more specified, sub-categorized kinds of politeness. All in all, these factors suggest that it is difficult to restrict 'politeness' to a literal (linguistic) factor, much less to a single word simply and absolutely.

From a historical perspective, words such as 'elegant', 'gentle' and 'modest', which appeared in some of the grammar books in the LModE period, can function as clues which represent the characteristics of politeness at that time. This is because the same words can also be confirmed in the books which provide advice in terms of manner or usage (of language) during the period. Morgan (1994: 8) suggests that manner books which had been published in the LModE period can be divided into

three categories depending on period. The early period up to the 1770s was the time of the 'courtesy' book; in the middle period (1774 – 1830), we have the 'conduct' book; and in the final period from 1830s on, we have the 'etiquette' book. The word 'courtesy' is adopted based mainly on social and cultural 'habits' or conventional ways of thinking; "proper conduct" was seen "as an urgent concern for many upper- and middle-class English people" and as for 'etiquette', it is described as "more frivolous, fashionable" (Morgan 1994: 8). The chronological divisions provided here coincide with some of the significant historical social events discussed in chapter 1 of this thesis. For instance, in the latter half of the eighteenth century more cities were being developed holding larger populations (see chapter 1, section 1.1.2.1 and Beal 2004: 6, Görlach 2001: 8). It is estimated that this emergence of cities owed its development to the infrastructure of the road system whose heyday was during the period 1730 – 1780 (see chapter 1, section 1.1.4, and Beal 2004: 7). This infrastructure may have given rise to increased social and geographical mobility. While these industrial activities continued, they in turn came to encourage the development of educational institutes (Beal 2004: 5), the railroad system (Beal 2004: 8) and printed literature (Görlach 1999: 21) in the period after 1830. Since it is said that the period between 1830 and 1870 was "the heyday of capitalist industrialism" (Görlach 1999: 6), it may be said that the period immediately after 1830 marked another stage with regard to the history of social mobility (see chapter 1, section 1.1.2), when the middle class began to establish a more confident status in British society. This way of classification of the periods might concur with Wildeblood and Brinson's (1965) view, which deconstructs politeness depending on the period under discussion: oligarchy – bourgeois, during the period of the eighteenth - nineteenth century. They take up 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Chesterfield, Philip Dormer Stanhope's *Letters*<sup>21</sup> which was compiled as a book in 1774, and tell that gentlemanly conduct was

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<sup>21</sup> cf. Earl of Chesterfield, Philip Dormer Stanhope (1774). *Letters to his son*. Letters written by the late Right Honourable Philip Dormer Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield, to his son, Philip Stanhope, Esq., late extraordinary to the court of Dresden: together with several other pieces on various subject. London: Printed for J. Dodsley.

indicated by such kind of courtesy literature. This sounds as if there were possibly such recognitions of courtesy, conduct and etiquette:

- (22) Lord Chesterfield's *Letters* thus provide a watershed in courtesy literature between the polite world of the eighteenth-century oligarchy and its nineteenth-century bourgeois equivalent, just as Erasmus had stood at the dividing line between medieval and Renaissance ideals of behaviour.

(Wildeblood and Brinson 1965: 38)

From such discussions, it seems as though there existed three kinds of books associated with different periods. The next three sections look at each of these types of publication in more depth.

### 3.1.2.1 Courtesy publications

There are several ideas which are raised as characteristics of the courtesy publications in the eighteenth century. Curtin (1985: 400-401) suggests that there existed a particular religious force which influenced people's view in that period. Curtin (1985: 401) says that the Christian virtues which led the direction of morality were "self-control, reasonableness, tact, and moderation". These virtues, however, do not seem specific to the period. A similar situation can also be found in the description of education and society in Tudor England by Simon (1966), for instance. Since Simon mainly deals with these issues in the period of 15<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, it may be regarded that the Christian conceptualization or perspective, i.e. 'courtesy' had been valid for a long period prior to the eighteenth century.

Curtin (1985: 407) further suggests that the courtesy book had taken over the standpoint of "the Renaissance tradition of self-cultivation". Aarsleff (1967: 5) provides information that the study of language and mind in the eighteenth century was influenced by a philosophical perspective which observed things from a universal perspective. Combined with information that courtesy writers had a

standpoint which was based on classical antiquity and virtue (Curtin 1985: 397), it can be estimated that courtesy had been identified as something whereby people acquired a universal virtue as a result of developing an independent, self-controlled persona.

Male aristocrats seem to be the main target readers of such books. Armstrong (1987: 98) says that the books were written for “the male of the dominant class” at the end of the seventeenth century, while another social historian suggests that courtesy books were normally “written for established aristocratic gentlemen” (Morgan 1994: 15). However, a certain change was to occur at the end of the eighteenth century. It seems that up to that point politeness or manners had often been generally conceptualised related conventionally to Christian-based philosophy and morals. The age of Romanticism provoked a change to the traditional view, as noted by Curtin (1985: 406, 408-409) who says that more practical ‘conduct’ as a marker of ‘manners’, separated from ‘morality’, was emphasised.

An early example of a ‘courtesy’ publication is Brathwait’s *The English Gentleman* published in 1630. The dedicatory epistle claims that it is important to have virtue, goodness of person and decency as a (gentle)man. Brathwait regularly refers to God and Christian ideals as the bases of his argument. An example of such a text in the LModE period is *Rules of Good Deportment For Church – Officers; or Friendly Advices To Them* by Adam Petrie (1730). The aspect of its traditional nature as a courtesy book can be confirmed from the following citation:

- (23) Religion, Reason and Experience combine, in shewing, That a good Repute is much to be esteemed, not only as a fair blooming Ornament of our Peace and Safety: It fits us to answer the End of our Creation and Preservation, in advancing of God's Glory, the Good of our Fellow Creatures, and our own eternal Happiness A Pious Person can, with Courage, run down Vice, as the Disturber of Peace, and Serenity of Mind; and that which fills the Soul with the Storms of the thundering Threats of God's Law.

(Petrie 1730: 1)

Thus aspects of courteous behaviour explicitly linked to religious practices continued well into the eighteenth century. The relation between 'manners' and 'courtesy' is clearly established in other such texts from the early eighteenth century. Consider the citation below.

- (24) to compleat our selves in true *Politeness*, we need go no farther than the Rules of Civility; and that Civility being nothing but a certain Modesty and courteous Disposition which is to accompany us in all our Actions, we could not more usefully discourse of any other Virtue, (suppose we were able) considering this directs us to the acquisition of a thing, that conciliates Applause, and the Affection of the whole World.

(Anon 1703: 3)

### 3.1.2.2 Conduct publications

It is said that the 'conduct' book took over the role of 'courtesy' book during the nineteenth century; in this section I explore what a 'conduct' book is, and how it differs from 'courtesy' publications. While 'courtesy' was regarded as a particular



state of behaviour, this 'conduct' was defined rather generally as 'the manner' of behaviour. In this respect, 'conduct' should be a rather broader concept, regarding the individual's behaviour and actions, rather than a more God-given state.

Recall that the target readers of the courtesy book were adult aristocratic men. Here, however, such a narrow view seems to be widened, so as to include women and young people as readers of the conduct book (Morgan 1994: 15). Armstrong (1987: 96) calls such readers "the new domestic woman" and "the new economic man" reflecting their alleged prosperous activity and improved state in the early nineteenth century society. While the age and gender of the readership was broadened, the target class also changed, shifting from the aristocrats to the middle class who increasingly made up a large part of the reading public. It is said that this shift had almost been completed by the end of the eighteenth century (Armstrong and Tennenhouse 1987: 11-12). This shift must owe something to the social and economic revolution of the late eighteenth century.

The standpoint of the writers of such texts seems also changed. Morgan (1994: 16) describes that the bases shifted from "religion", "morality", "benevolence", "vanity", "modesty" and "virtue", to "appearance", "external manners" and "social custom". Indeed, the movement from the previous more fundamental and immanent aspects of human nature to the latter more socially motivated aspects corresponds to the explanations of the characteristics of both the 'courtesy' and the 'conduct' (books).

An early example of a conduct book is one by Hester Chapone, who wrote a book entitled *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind, Addressed to A Young Lady* in 1774. Chapone points out that, while women were well versed in domestic economic issues, women also needed proper manners, which were as useful in society as the virtues of Christianity (1774: 93); together, all of these could connect people to particular kinds of polite behaviour (1774: 94).

- (25) To be perfectly polite, one must have great 'presence of mind',  
with a delicate and quick 'sense of propriety'

(Chapone 1774: 96)



The proposed broad concept 'sense of propriety' reflected a newly emerging social need at the time. Gisborne (1795 vol.1: 1) also tells of the importance of manners as a socially obligatory performance for the higher and middle classes. It is obvious that this was a requirement which resulted from the process of the social and economic revolution: in volume 2, Gisborne lays down an independent section to describe the duties of the people who engaged in trade and business such as manufacturers, bankers and brokers (1795 vol.2: sec.xiii).

### **3.1.2.3 Etiquette publications**

As time went by, it is said that the manner book evolved into the 'etiquette' book. According to Curtin (1985: 411), such a change was clearly found in the period after 1830. 'Etiquette' is defined as "the customary code of polite behaviour in a society" (OED: The Concise Oxford Dictionary 1999). As the words 'customary' and 'society' show, this concept has its roots in the social environment and conduct: it is cultural knowledge.

One thing which can be recognised from the description of the etiquette book during the period is that the book was written mainly for the middle class. This expression might give the impression that it is almost the same type of publication as the conduct book, and as a result it is not so helpful as a particular characteristic or diagnostic; however, it can be possible to take it as distinct feature of such texts. In the previous period, the conduct book represented a period which was on the way to the establishment of the modern class - based society; by the time of the emergence of the etiquette book, the status of the middle class had been more firmly established, and it is therefore possible to claim more certainly that the book was for a particular social stratum. Morgan (1994: 20) describes "newly-enriched, middle class adults seeking the manners, dress and external polish suitable for mixing in fashionable 'Society'" as the primary readers of the book. Curtin also makes the same point and tells that the manners the middle class wanted were "the specific details of the aristocratic life-style" (1985: 412). Here, we can see that the information which was

provided in the etiquette book was more detailed, in other words, practical and easily applicable to their actual life, with explanations of appropriate manners depending on concrete situations, such as church services, balls, diplomacy and dinner, and dealing with people of different ranks and occupations (e.g. Anon 1826, Anon 1849). It seems that this specificity coheres with the suggested concept of 'etiquette': to distinguish and use different manners tactfully and properly was a status most of the middle class people desired to acquire. It is also said that status and manner were related to each other: to hold status and to know manners were connected to career success (Curtin 1985: 414, 417). This kind of more practical and detailed information may be regarded as the key issue in politeness for middle class society in the later part of the LModE period.

There is one further general issue which is pointed out as a characteristic of the etiquette book. Previously, polite manners tended to be treated and conceptualised as relating explicitly to the 'self'. It seems that in the period of the etiquette book this tendency declined. Instead, what took over is more altruistic idea of politeness. What I mean by 'altruistic' here is that taking others' happiness or benefit more into consideration became more prominent towards the end of the period (cf. Watts 2002). Morgan describes this point as "self-sacrifice and a sensitivity to the feelings of others" (1994: 23, cf. Curtin 1987, 1985). In addition, Morgan points out the following characteristic of the etiquette books, which is provided as contrast to the other manner books of the earlier periods.

- (26) Unlike courtesy and conduct books, these works viewed behaviour as a product more of particular settings and circumstances than of universally suitable internal moral principles or laws of good taste.

(Morgan 1994: 24)

As noted in chapter 1, section 1.1.1, under the developing, industrialised, democratic society, a new culture of capital-based business arose as the system which supported new economic activity. In this newly industrialised society, the

new middle class communities felt it important to master good, proper socialisation skills. People had realised the value of having good social skills to achieve success in the capitalist world. Basic capitalist life was centred on commercial business which required more formal social encounters and opportunities to develop the business. Therefore, the business incurred the need of good diplomacy. The key thing to advance in the society was to have productive social relationships and good sociability. As a result, it is no wonder that etiquette books increase in popularity. All in all, the Victorian era which is described in the etiquette book valued familiarity as the proper social manner, something which was highly valued among the rising middle class (Morgan 1994: 19, 23)

Possibly encouraged by the improved lifestyle in an economically more prosperous environment, publications in general seem to have been more easily available to the reading public. This was particularly the case for the middle class: besides this increased affluence of the middle class, their interest in knowing the appropriate social etiquette must have given impetus to the further supply and demand of such books. Publishing facts mean that it is possible to see the popularity of the etiquette book at that time. It is said that *Hints on Etiquette and the Usage of Society* by William Day went through twenty-six editions from 1834 to 1849, and *Etiquette for the Ladies* (author not provided) had thirty-three editions by 1846 (Morgan 1994: 20). Publications such as *The Spirit of Etiquette, or, Politeness* (author unreadable: 'De S\*\*\*\*\* Lady'<sup>22</sup> 1838), *Etiquette for Ladies, etc.* (author unavailable 1876), *The Ladies' Pocket Book of Etiquette* (only provided as author: 'A. F.' 1838), *Etiquette for Gentlemen: With Hints on the Art of Conversation* (author unavailable 1841) and *Guide to English Etiquette ... for Ladies and Gentlemen* (author unavailable 1844) (The last two are cited from Morgan 1994: 21) indicate that the books were written broadly for both men and women. This is a natural consequence of the situation in the previous period relating to the 'conduct' book.

How can we verify the 'altruistic' nature of guidance on politeness in this period? Both the structure and content of etiquette books suggest this. *The Young Man's Mentor, On His Entrance Into Life* (Anon 1849) has chapters such as "Dress"

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<sup>22</sup> \* = unreadable part.

(v), “Cheap Pleasures – Evening Leisure” (vi), “Friends and Companions” (vii) and “The Fine Arts” (xii). Each chapter title describes a rather concrete situation or subject. ‘Dress’ provides the information of proper dress code, for instance, while the chapter ‘Friends and Companions’ includes the following advice in the part regarding ‘conversation’:

(27)

- When the conversation droops, revive it by introducing some topic so general that all can say something upon it.
- Bear with much that seems impertinent.
- Be free and easy, and try to make all the rest feel so.

(extracted from Anon 1849: 37-38)

The common point which connects these is that it is good or ‘proper’ to keep the conversation in harmony and to make others feel comfortable, to avoid making them anxious. In short, it is important to be thoughtful to others. This concern with language is not just related to function, but also to form: John Earle, in his *English Prose. Its Elements, History, and Usage* (1890), advises his readers that to keep practicing English grammar with propriety is “like the common forms of deportment in society” (1890: 46).

#### 3.1.2.4 Common features across the types of manner book

While the chronological categorisation of such guidance on behaviour as ‘courtesy’, ‘conduct’ and ‘etiquette’ books is a fair classification, the boundaries between such types of texts are not sharp. The reason for this is because there are several facts which make it difficult to distinguish one member of the category from another. For instance, it is often the case that we can find information that the conduct book is also grounded on religious principles (Morgan 1994: 17) which was identified as one of the bases of the courtesy book. In fact, Thomas Gisborne who wrote *An Enquiry into the Duties of Men in the Higher and Middle Classes of Society*

in *Great Britain* in 1795 supplied another text in 1799 in which the value of Christianity was eagerly explained. One of the examples which show his enthusiastic approach is provided below.

- (28) Throughout the whole work it has been my predominant desire to direct the acquisition of knowledge to its proper purpose; the establishment and confirmation of Christian views, motives, and practice throughout life.

(Gisborne 1799: x)

Fordyce also advanced the religious based conceptualisation of good manners in a book *Address to the Deity* which he published in 1785. Furthermore, in Chapone's *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind, Addressed to A Young Lady* (1774), which can possibly be regarded as a conduct book as far as the time of publication is concerned, the author wrote of the importance of the more conventional and internal or introspective perspective which was given as a distinctive feature of the courtesy book:

- (29) To be perfectly polite, one must have great 'presence of mind', with a delicate and quick 'sense of propriety'

(Chapone 1774: vol.2: 96)

Similarly, *Etiquette of Courtship and Marriage* (Anon 1844: v) suggests that mere etiquette is not enough and it is important to have a moral based view. All of these examples can be regarded as the exceptions to a sharp categorisation of different kinds of texts, but this is to be expected. Although there are tendencies which characterise manner books of different periods, there is bound to be some overlap. But this is not the main issue: what is surely central is that politeness had been variously conceptualised, being influenced by the currents of the times, namely changes in societies and cultures.

### 3.1.3 Summary

There are two main issues regarding the 'universal' aspect of politeness. One is that there is a guiding concept of 'face' to assess people's feelings and mind-set, which connect to how, when and why polite expressions are uttered. The other is that a linguistic expression as a whole, together with other non-linguistic factors such as facial expression, gesture, circumstance, etc. affects the quality of politeness. Therefore, depending on context, any given expression may be polite in one utterance but not polite at another. In addition, these universal conceptualizations are commonly affected by social factors, individual variation and the mutual relationship between the two. This fluctuation leads to set another aspect of politeness, a culturally variable one.

Politeness in the LModE period therefore is a mixture of the cultural (variable) and innate (universal). It has been almost twenty years since the publication of Brown and Levinson's politeness theory. Several researchers have dealt with and argued over the definition and conceptualization of politeness since then (e.g. Azuma 1994, Thomas 1995, Cutting 2002, Watts 2003). In some ways, Brown and Levinson's politeness theory is not exactly a theory of linguistics; rather it is more like a combined theory of communication and the negotiation of personal relations which is comprehensive and dynamic (Usami 2002 no.③: 111-112). This seems to reflect a holistic approach in terms of the conceptualisation of politeness as 'attention (consideration) to others' which was a characteristic of the LModE period. Watts (2003: 257) says:

- (30) 'polite behaviour' is that behaviour, linguistic and non-linguistic, which the participants construct as being appropriate to the ongoing social interaction.

(Watts 2003: 257)



It seems that 'politeness' in general can be interpreted in a variety of ways from different perspectives. As far as the observation above suggests, it is likely that the theory which is introduced by Brown and Levinson focuses mainly on the individual, innate aspect. This can be universally applicable on one hand; however, on the other, this does not cover everything which affects our conceptualization of politeness. That is why, while the theory is valued and has provided opportunities for further related, advanced studies, it has also provoked some debates from researchers who know cultures and language use which are different from those of English-speaking communities (e.g. Ide, Hill, Carnes, Ogino, and Kawasaki 1992; Usami 2002).

To conclude, this part of the present chapter has attempted to suggest that there were at least two different ideas regarding politeness during the period of LModE, namely, those more socially variable and culturally specific on the one hand, and those more universally and genetically common to all humans on the other. Although there are several means by which politeness can be conveyed, language seems to be one of the main ways of expressing both types of politeness. In discussing polite behaviour in the late Modern period, researchers have suggested three stages in terms of the development of the manner book: courtesy, conduct and etiquette, varying by eras: before 1770, from 1770 to 1830, and after 1830, respectively. 'Courtesy' books represent a period in which the aristocracy had still made their influence felt; the 'conduct' book helped people to get to know appropriate ways to behave in a rapidly changing social structure; and the 'etiquette' books cover appropriate manners in a gradually developing modern, capitalist society. This way of classification can be accepted rather as a tendency, but not absolute. While this transition is indicated in social history, I would like to add another dimension which can also be noticed from the descriptions in the books of the LModE period. It is the transition in which conceptualisations of politeness have changed subtly from more internal, formal, and ego-centric, to more external, social and culture based. It is also important to clarify that in any instance of polite behaviour – including the use of polite language – both aspects will almost always be involved.



### **3.2 Developing the theory of face**

Section 3.1.1 above outlined aspects of a universal theory of politeness; section 3.1.2 suggested that there are some aspects of politeness that are culturally specific. As a result, we now face a situation in which variability and universality coexist. This section reconsiders and develops a face-based politeness theory to investigate the relative weights of variability and universality. Finally a comparative study between languages (synchronic, diachronic and cross-linguistic) is made to examine relevant issues in the expression of politeness. As already suggested, discussions and studies of politeness have caused disagreement between researchers from different societies who are researching different languages. Most of them agree with the idea that the influence of social and cultural phenomena encourages a variety of conceptualisations of politeness. It can sometime be difficult to see the detailed mechanism of such conceptualisations which brings about this diversity. I would like to pursue this in order to achieve a better understanding of the relationship between language and politeness.

#### **3.2.1 Further observations on face and politeness**

It is said that face is a social image of an individual which emerges through interactions with others (Goffman 1955: 213). The application or strategy of 'face', i.e. 'face work', is influenced by the understanding which is acquired by experiencing and engaging in interactions in society. Given the diversity of societies and cultures, we might expect to encounter a variety of kinds of face work if we assume that face work is culture-specific. However, the word 'face' seems to give people an impression which is strongly connected to individuals as a mere reflection of their own existence, not to be considered as a reflex of social and cultural influences very much. The principles of face rely on our understanding of exchange with others; without this, the concept 'face' does not work properly. This can be

noticed in the quotation below from Brown and Levinson (1987), where they outline their account of how 'face' is an aspect of shared practice:

- (31)-a In general, people cooperate (and assume each other's cooperation) in maintaining face in interaction, such cooperation being based on the mutual vulnerability of face. That is, normally, everyone's face depends on everyone else's being maintained, and since people can be expected to defend their faces if threatened, and in defending their own to threaten others' faces, it is in general in every participant's best interest to maintain each other's face, that is, to act in ways that assure the other participants that the agent is heedful of the assumptions concerning face under (i) above.

where (i) is

- (31)-b (i) 'face', the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself, consisting in two related aspects: [i.e. negative and positive HO]

(extracted from Brown and Levinson 1987: 61)

What Brown and Levinson note here is that people have a tendency to try to maintain face, and such maintenance includes respect for the face of others, and its restoration when it is degraded. Usami also recognises that research in politeness normally suggests that while the desire for face recognition is universal, the specific politeness strategies adopted can differ depending on languages and cultures (2003: 120). Since specific linguistic forms, patterns of expression are social and cultural products, it is no wonder that the strategy is different in specific cultures. The Cooperative Principle proposed by Grice (1975: 45-46) also seems to suggest that effective communication is valued across cultures. This instinctive desire is subconscious, and is different from its means of expression. There are basic human

needs, which are satisfied by using polite expressions. It is these needs which are innate, not the polite means of expression which serve to satisfy those needs. In this regard, we can therefore conceive of two things which shared across cultures, and not affected by differences in society very much. One is a concept of face; the other is the tendency which tries to protect and support face in general social encounters. This second issue is the critical factor which makes Brown and Levinson's politeness theory widely applicable.

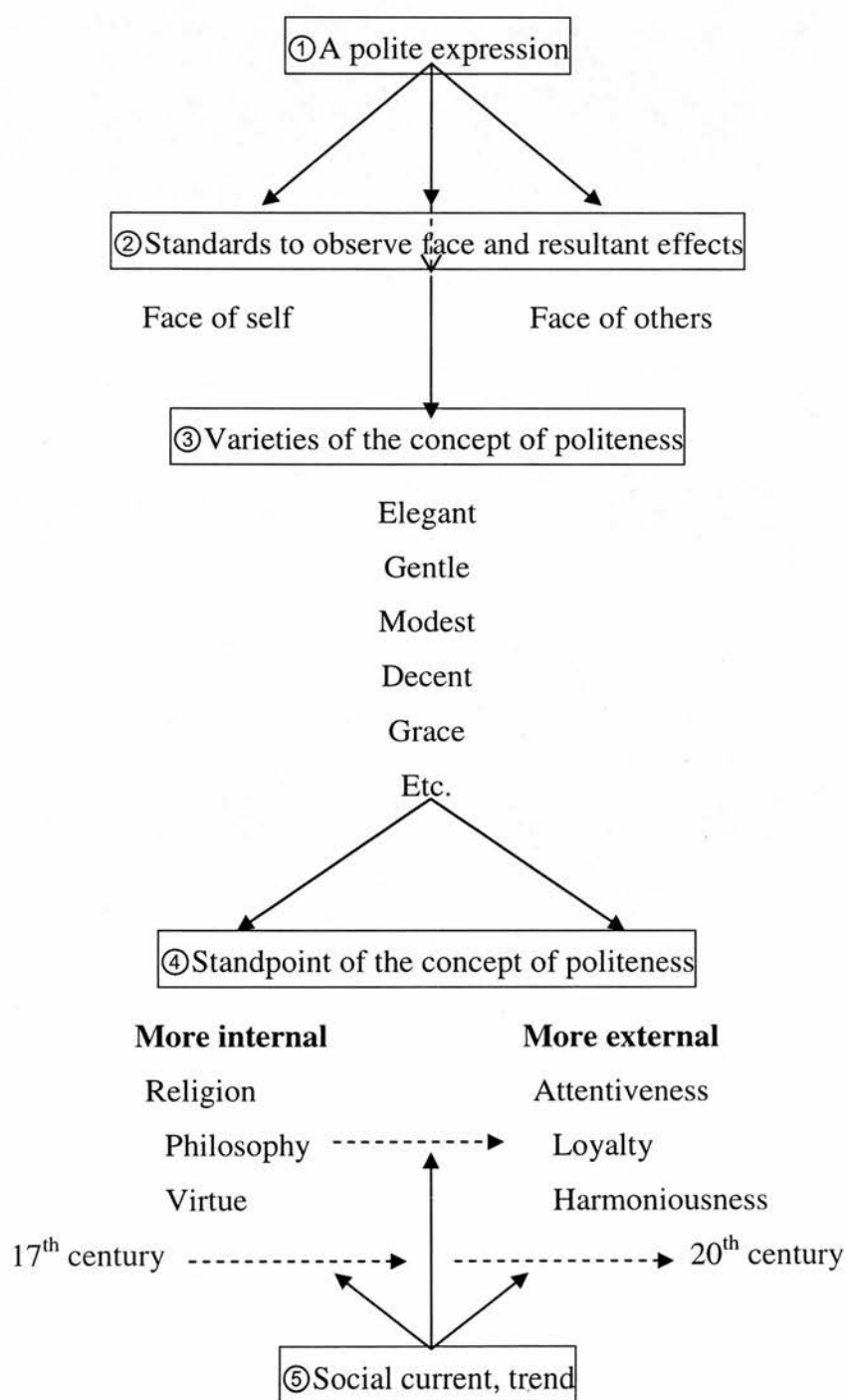
However, there is another issue to be addressed, regarding how people conceptualize and utilise politeness. In section 3.1.2, research (e.g. by Cutting 2002 and Matsumoto 1988) was discussed that suggested there are cultural differences which affect our politeness strategies and therefore need to be taken into consideration, in addition to the universal model adopted by Brown and Levinson. Usami (2003: 121) discusses these two aspects of politeness in some detail, comparing and contrasting the 'positive – negative' approach of the Brown and Levinson theory with the variable strategies which reflect different expressions and conceptualisations of politeness depending on languages and cultures. What Usami proposes is that it is important not to discuss these universal and variable aspects together, but to study them separately as different, independent issues. Indeed, most criticisms towards the Brown and Levinson theory are concerned with the failure to deal with indications of variation across languages, i.e. the existence of variability such as those introduced above. Nevertheless, since both aspects are involved in any given instance of the use of polite language, there should be something which connects both aspects. One of the aims of this thesis is to pursue the mechanism of the connection, in regard to the particular uses of the modal auxiliary verb. This is discussed in more detail in chapter 4 and 5.

### **3.2.2 Applying face to variable data**

We have noticed that the grammar and manner books in the LModE period suggest that to be well-mannered is to be polite, and vice versa. Consequently, as the manner books themselves indicate, key concepts such as 'elegant', 'gentle', 'modest',

'decent' and 'grace' were introduced in the manner books to represent 'politeness'. This means, in particular, behaviour which was 'elegant', 'gentle', 'modest', 'decent', and associated with 'grace' were said to raise the 'face' of both self (the speaker) and others (the hearer). Examples like 'elegant' etc. are therefore said to indicate the trend of the concept of politeness in the LModE period. We can relate this to the two aspects of politeness which are discussed in the previous section: internal and universal on the one hand, cultural and variable on the other. During LModE we seem to see a shift in emphasis in the usage books to discussions of the culturally specific. It was suggested that the newly emerged, industrialised business – based society had provided more opportunities to socialise and communicate with others. In chapter 1, section 1.1.2, we can see that these opportunities arose as a result of increased social and geographic mobility for an increasing proportion of the population. This created the need for guidance on a particular kind of polite behaviour. I have illustrated this in figure 1 below. First, there is an expression which is regarded as polite. Second, there are two aspects of face with regard to the difference of the perspective: the first more concerned with the self, and the second more concerned with the needs of others. Third, there are several features of politeness which may be particularly associated with a particular period, or a particular social environment. Fourth, there is a combined base which mediates between the two aspects of face, internal and external. Fifth, there is an attempt to show that what is considered 'polite' may vary over time.

**Figure 3.1** Compositional arrangement of conceptualisation of politeness (LModE)



We can see that there are several factors which are involved in the understanding of a polite expression. As has been suggested previously, these influences are mutually reinforcing. For example, there is no particular boundary which separates the internal from the external aspects of the concept of politeness in periods of transition – one aspect may be prevalent in one period, and another in the next, depending on cultural change. In other words, therefore, the mixture is not like that of, for example, oil and water, whose border can easily and clearly be seen. Rather, the mixture should be supposed to be more like a cup of coffee in which all the contents – water, the extract of coffee (beans), milk and sweetener dissolve and are mixed together. While such a mixture looks blended, not all the components may be equally represented: some may be in different proportions in different communities.

Last, but not least, we should notice the existence of certain dynamism of the conceptualisation of politeness. The several concepts of politeness in the LModE period, i.e. elegant, gentle, modest, etc. themselves involve a certain fluctuation between the internal and external standpoints, depending on context. Furthermore, likewise, which concepts are present, that is, which are included in a polite expression, also relates to context. Moreover, there is the influence of a particular social trend which may affect the nature and function of polite expressions. All in all, we may say that the concept of politeness is always evolving.

### **3.2.3 A cross-linguistic analysis: comparing American English and Japanese**

This section compares aspects of polite language in a variety of Present-Day English (standard American English) with their equivalents in another language (Japanese), providing a cross linguistic analysis to further illustrate variability in conceptualisations of politeness

First of all, I provide data which illustrates some of the contemporary concepts of politeness for both American and Japanese speakers. A study by Ide, Hill, Carnes, Ogino and Kawasaki (1992) compares degrees of politeness inherent in the lexical semantics of several adjectives in English and Japanese. The following

table shows how 219 American and 282 Japanese college students rank a set of words by the extent to which they correlate with the word ‘polite’ (or its Japanese equivalent ‘teineina’):

(32) **Table 3.1 Rank orders of correlation coefficients of “polite” / “teineina” to adjectives in their respective languages.**

<b>Americans</b>		<b>Japanese</b>	
<u>Polite</u>		<u>Teineina</u>	
respectful	0.9892	keii no aru	0.9697
considerate	0.9868	kanzi yoi	0.9108
pleasant	0.9713	tekisetuna	0.8544
friendly	0.9103	omoiyari no aru	0.7496
appropriate	0.8826	kidoranai	0.2816
casual	0.1204		
<hr/>		sitasigena	-0.3213
conceited	-0.7995	unuboreteiru	-0.6848
offensive	-0.9189	kanzyou wo kizutukeru	-0.7078
rude	-0.9545	bureina	-0.7880

(Ide *et al.* 1992: 290)

Ide *et al.* emphasise the importance of ‘friendly’ in the conceptualization of politeness for Americans. It is this which differentiates the ranking between the two languages, and they suggest:

- (33) studies of cross-cultural politeness cannot assume equivalence of key concepts, but must identify structural patterns of similarities and differences.

(Ide *et al.* 1992: 290)



Their claim leads to an idea that there exist differences between languages with regard to the conceptualisation of politeness, and that this may be influenced by social and cultural circumstances. As the experimental data by Ide *et al.* show, the equivalent sense of 'friendly' in Japanese (i.e. 'sitasigena') is not counted as polite. Actually it is rather regarded as impolite. This is quite a contrast to the situation in American English. This is perhaps because friendly expressions can be construed as a "bald on record" FTA (cf. Cutting 2002: 46). Japanese speakers conventionally think that expressions without the terms of respect sound more friendly, i.e. frank and familiar. This means that such friendly expressions tend to be regarded as blunt and rude to the people who are not the speaker's families or close friends (Kikuchi 1997: 63-64). It is estimated that the reason for this is because in Japanese the speaker gets used to expressing such respectful expressions (cf. Ikuta 1997: 68); on the other hand, expressions without the terms of respect can be taken, in a sense, as not so thoughtful. As a result, this is equal to the 'bald on record' FTA. Ikuta (1997: 68) believes that, due to the existence of the honorific system in Japanese, Japanese speakers tend to recognise politeness markers, but these are restricted in scope, with the result that a well entrenched link between 'polite' and 'respectful' emerges in the speaker's mind. A study conducted by Usami (2001: 10-11) suggests that 70% of all utterances in Japanese contain some sort of honorific. In addition, such honorific-oriented expressions are used regardless of age, sex, and status of the participants in the discourse. It is therefore possible to understand why the notion 'honorific use' = 'polite' = 'respectful' has become so entrenched in Japanese. Consequently, the question of why 'friendliness' is not regarded as polite can be explained. The 'honorific' in Japanese functions as a term of 'respect' or 'honour', concepts which mark social distance between speaker and addressee. Because of this, it is understandable that the Japanese language may tend to be more associated with negative politeness marking, at least as far as part of the honorific system is concerned. The Japanese honorific includes three kinds of sub-categories: words of respect, words of modesty and words of courteousness (cf. e.g. Kikuchi 1997: 379). Each of these words is strongly connected to the concept of politeness in Japanese,

and all these words mark social distance. There is no particular trace of 'friendliness' marked in the system itself. This language-specific phenomenon is characteristic of the culture in which the linguistic system operates, and such linguistic and cultural attributes are therefore clearly variable cross-linguistically. As I argue extensively in chapter 4 below, in LModE, the modal auxiliary verb had begun to be regarded as a marker of politeness, related to other senses such as 'gentle' and 'elegant'. However, the relation between the linguistic means of expression and the conceptualisation of politeness does not seem to be as strong as that of the Japanese honorific system. While the terms of respect in Japanese has been established as part of the grammatical system (Kikuchi 1997), the modal auxiliary verb has not been established and regarded like that. In addition to the various senses which can be interpreted from the uses of the modal auxiliary verb, modal auxiliaries do not necessarily, specifically and invariably mean 'polite'. They acquire such a specific meaning only in context, and as such, contrast with the Japanese honorific system which makes the words attached always automatically polite. In addition, while the distinction between positive and negative politeness is one of the main aspects of Brown and Levinson's theory, the complexity of the cultural aspect of politeness often means both types coexist in any given utterance in a particular context; and how we apply the strategies and how we conceptualise politeness are not so simple. The connection between the conceptualisation of politeness and social and cultural influence is sometimes *recondite*.

Ide *et al*'s study above is concerned with a comparison between present-day American English and present-day Japanese. I will apply some of the observations they make based on their study to my own discussion of politeness and modality in LModE in subsequent chapters. Here I wish to identify factors specific to (American) English and to Japanese. This will make it easier compare the differences and similarities with those of LModE (with the possibility of confirming what is particular to expressions of politeness in the LModE period).

### 3.2.4 Ide *et al.* (1992): American English and Japanese data

The major adjectives associated with politeness for the American English speakers are: 'respectful', 'considerate', 'pleasant', 'friendly' and 'appropriate' as the statistics above in table 3.1 show. Although Ide *et al.* (1992) link 'pleasant' with 'kanzi yoi' in Japanese, this seems to me as a native speaker of Japanese to be dubious. 'Kanzi yoi' literally means 'good feeling'; therefore, at first glance, there seems to be no problem to link the two words in each language. However, the pragmatics of 'kanzi yoi' is more complex. When 'kanzi yoi' is related to 'politeness', it really has the meanings 'refined', 'modest' and even 'sedate'. Nonetheless, the point is, as the study of Ide *et al.* suggests, it is possible to take that the politeness in the American English can clearly be associated with 'friendly' or 'cheerful' behaviour, and this is not exactly the case in Japanese.

How and why is such an active sense involved, and how do we explain the difference between the American and Japanese informants? To a large extent, certain things characteristic of contemporary American society, i.e. 'entertainment', 'individualism', 'positiveness' and 'philanthropy' are related more or less to 'friendly' and 'pleasant' manner. This is confirmed by Werking (1997):

- (34) The social practice of friendship in the United States and in other Western cultures typically implies a particular relationship between persons, one that is equal and voluntary in nature.

(Werking 1997: 7)

This is not radically different from the relation between the social factors and the concepts of politeness in the LModE period.

By contrast, the major concepts of politeness raised by Japanese speakers are: 'keii no aru', 'kanzi yoi', 'tekisetuna' and 'omoiyari no aru'. Although these are connected to 'respectful', 'pleasant', 'appropriate' and 'considerate' as their respective equivalents in English, I suggest that it is better not to take such literal

meanings but to consider some alternative senses which emerge in particular contexts. As I explained with regard to the dubious relation between 'pleasant' and 'kanzi yoi', what should be pointed out is that all the concepts of politeness in Japanese here seem to be connected to the existence of the terms of respect in Japanese. Politeness in Japanese, therefore, is more associated with being 'respectful', 'courteous', 'modest', 'favourable' (harmonious, giving consent), 'temperate' and 'thoughtful'. There is no particular (gaily) 'cheerful', 'active' aspect found here as there is in American English. It can be observed that all of these meanings are somewhat 'self-effacing' and 'reserved'. The reason why such terms of respect are taken up is because the grammatically established terms (of respect) are categorized into three groups: the word of respect, the word of modesty and the word of courtesy (Nakano *et al.* 1997: 144, Kikuchi 1997: 379-380). The words 'respect', 'modest' and 'courtesy' coincide with the senses which can be deduced from the raised concepts of politeness (cf. the earlier discussion on politeness in LModE in section 3.1 above). Japan's history is one of a feudal society which had run under the system based on strict social positions. Japan has a long history of a lineage system which makes people have perception that families matter, but the others are very much outsiders (Moeran 1988). This leads people to treat others very formally, emphasising status and social distance, with the consequence of using many polite expressions, i.e. the terms of respect. Such a history encouraged the adoption of the terms of respect, and created a kind of culture which almost relies on the terms of respect (cf. Kikuchi 1997: 379-380, Ikuta 1997: 68). As time has gone by, Japan has now come to be regarded as one of the most developed societies in the world. Many newly emerged Western products – and with it, the associated cultures – have flown into Japanese society, and it is generally said that the society has been getting more and more Westernised. Nevertheless, even though the foreign culture has a certain impact on the society, tradition often prevails. For example, while business opportunities have spread globally and people may adopt a friendlier manner, Japanese businessmen are still quite famous for their greeting style of bowing as a mark of their politeness and respect – consider the cover picture of Watts (2003)!! Here again, it is very clear that some aspects of their

conceptualisation of politeness is peculiar to that society; and the peculiarity seems to be influenced by their culture and the condition of the society. The notion that polite behaviour can be distinctive in each society, where each involves its own uses of language for politeness-related expressions, which was suggested for LModE, seems to apply to different communities in the present day.

### 3.3 Summary of chapter 3

The idea of 'face' as an index to gauge people's motivations for polite behaviour seems to be universally applicable: it is possible to apply the concept to all communities, irrespective of time and place. It can be confirmed that Brown and Levinson were right to adopt 'face' as a key factor in our understanding of politeness. At the same time, there is other evidence to suggest that some aspects of politeness may be culturally specific. This represents the state of politeness which can be differentiated depending on the spatial and temporal location of a given society, although different cultures may share many of the same practices. In the first part of the LModE period polite behaviour reflected traditional, aristocratic tastes. This can be compared and contrasted with the friendliness associated with contemporary American politeness and the more conservative, respect-oriented politeness of the contemporary Japanese. In short, the concept changes reflecting social circumstances. Social factors are also considered in Brown and Levinson's theory; however, their explanation was focused mainly on universal patterns: power relations and distances between the speaker and the hearer in general. The formula which was proposed by them to calculate a certain hypothetical numerical value 'Wx' as the representative of the weightiness of the FTA of an expression is: " $Wx = D(S, H) + P(H, S) + Rx$ "<sup>23</sup> (Brown and Levinson 1987:76). In fact, they mention the other cultural influence as 'R'; nevertheless, the explanation provided is poor and we are

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<sup>23</sup> 'S' = Speaker, 'H' = Hearer, 'Wx' = the numerical value that measures the weightiness of the FTAx, 'D(S, H)' = the value that measures the social distance between S and H, 'P(S, H)' = a measure of the power that H has over S, 'Rx' = a value that measures the degree to which the FTAx is rated an imposition in that culture. (Brown and Levinson 1987: xii, 76)

not sure what the other cultural factors and influences are and how they work. It might be said that their 'R' as cultural influence was placed as a kind of 'black box', its contents unclear. Due mainly to discussion and observation of the LModE patterns, along with a comparison of contemporary American and Japanese data, some of the contents inside that box have been revealed. From these contemporary observations, we can notice that there exist certain cultural differences. However, such a synchronic view might seem to make it difficult for us to notice the significance of the (historical) cultural situation and possible change. In this thesis, the analysis of the LModE data contributes to an attempt to establish the importance of the cultural influences.

As already discussed, there has been criticism of Brown and Levinson's universal politeness theory (e.g. Usami 2002, Matsumoto 1988). But even such criticism has not gone far enough into the issue; these authors simply claim that the universality is not perfect, and provide examples of problem cases to illustrate their claim. This criticism is in part warranted by the evidence that there exist different conceptualisations of politeness between individuals. Some might be much influenced by cultural trends, while others might be more conservative. Kikuchi (1997: 78) supports the idea that there are psychological effects which create individually differentiated varieties of polite behaviour through language. In section 3.1.2.2 which suggested the potential existence of certain links between markers of politeness in LModE, it is possible to imagine the factors involved intermingle and overlap in a variety of ways. Since the same pattern can also be applied synchronically, diachronically and cross-linguistically, the (universal-variable, dichotomic) system which is suggested by the LModE data might be regarded as universally applicable in terms of the conceptualisation of politeness. The particular attitudes towards the concepts of politeness in the LModE period, such as elegant, gentle or modest behaviour are the results of the blends of many cultural factors. When the concept of politeness in LModE grammar and usage books is addressed, the modal auxiliary verbs often feature heavily. The next chapter explores this further.



## **Chapter 4. The relationship between modals and politeness in Late Modern English: evidence from grammar and usage manuals.**

### **4.1 Introduction**

Let us review the main issues discussed in this thesis so far. At least in part as a result of the demand due to influences from social factors (e.g. a belief in proper behaviour associated with particular forms of 'correct' speech, and the increase in educational provision) English grammar books appeared, had popularly been distributed, and had established their position for a subsection of the society in the Late Modern English period. In many such books, the concept of 'mood' was introduced as a system where the 'indicative' (mood) was central and the other moods took up their positions which surround the indicative, as if each of the other moods forms a counterpart to the indicative. Of the surrounding moods, the one which is ordinarily called 'subjunctive' or 'potential', which is regarded as marking expressions and situations which are hypothetical, incomplete, or indirect, covers a variety of non-default manners of expression which in turn involve a variety of meanings or interpretations. The reason for the use of 'a variety of' here is because the number and nature of the subdivisions of the category 'subjunctive' or 'potential' was considered by some Late Modern English grammarians to be uncertain (cf. e.g. Harrison 1848: 247, Connon 1845: 65). However, several grammarians had pointed out that the adoption of the mood system, which is based on the categorization of the different inflectional forms of verbs, was not in tune with the true structure of the English language (e.g. Webster 1789, Gough 1754, Priestley 1762).

Subsequently, what seemed to become more widely discussed is something akin to the related concept of modality and its formal expression via the modal auxiliary verb. However, while modal auxiliary verbs in English play the major role in modal expressions, it is clear that there remains a question as to how the restricted number of the modal auxiliary verb expresses such a wide range of modalities. Slight, subtle differences of modality can be distinguished and recognised in



linguistic expressions. If each linguistic outcome of the different modal expressions has its own distinct form, it is obvious that a simple formula: 'one single modal auxiliary verb = one single meaning / use' does not hold. There thus emerges another idea of polysemy: 'one single modal auxiliary verb = several meanings / uses'. This polysemy is composed of a series of linked modal senses. Since politeness can be associated with certain concepts such as 'gentle', 'elegant', 'indirect', 'hypothetical' etc., certain uses of the modals which vary depending on situations and contexts can induce the sense or feeling of politeness. This chapter discusses the situation in which the modal auxiliary verb expresses a variety of polite senses.

Section 4.2 treats the issue of the relation between the form and the senses of the modal auxiliary verb which are described in the grammar book of the Late Modern English period. Section 4.3 introduces data (from grammar and usage books) from which it is possible to recognise that there is information which suggests that the modal auxiliary verb can be regarded as a kind of a marker of politeness. Section 4.4 discusses a dynamic approach to modality and politeness which is linked to the historical process known as grammaticalization.

## **4.2 Definitions of the modal sense and grammatical functions of the modal auxiliary verb**

Chapter 2 (especially section 2.3.2) briefly indicates that there was a tendency for each author of a grammar book to write the contents of the book in a fairly idiosyncratic way in Late Modern English. There is no exception regarding the description of the definition of the form and meaning of the modal auxiliary verb. However, some common ground can be found. While the main issue in this chapter is the relation between the sense of politeness and the modal auxiliary verb, first, this section looks at the broader aspect of the relation between the form of the modal auxiliary verb and its meanings more generally, not restricted solely to the sense of politeness.

In the Late Modern English period it seems that grammarians tended to be quite arbitrary with regard to what was and what was not included in the grammar book (cf. chapter 2). Although this may sound likely to result in our seeing quite different contents and styles between grammarians, actually, as noted in chapter 2, section 2.2, the description style and contents relating to the form and meaning of the modal auxiliary verbs in the grammars in my corpus have substantial commonality between them, in terms of the basic definition of their grammatical properties and functions. As one subset of the category of auxiliary verbs, the modals were seen to have a particular grammatical function. This auxiliary function can be identified by looking at descriptions from the grammar book of that time, such as:

- (1) The Auxiliaries when in the service of other verbs lose much of that full meaning which they possessed as self-verbs.  
(Earle 1898: 59)
- (2) The auxiliaries necessarily to the formation of the English verb are many of them defective, having precisely those tenses only remaining, which are entirely wanting in the regular verb  
(Cornwallis 1847: 61)
- (3) An 'auxiliary' is a short verb prefixed to one of the principal parts of another verb,  
(Brown 1851: 344)
- (4) The helping verbs especially are a kind of symbols or representations of other words by which we speak abstractedly,  
(Sedger 1798: 36)

As we can see, the auxiliary verb itself is classified as dependent since it is a 'defective' 'prefix' and needs other 'principal' parts of the verb to create a well-formed clause. In case of the 'modal' auxiliary verb, it works to express certain

modality; however, the modality is 'abstract', and the auxiliary's meaning in comparison to a full or principal verb has been reduced but not lost, having undergone the semantic bleaching typical of grammaticalization (cf. Traugott and König 1991). In short, the modal auxiliary verb was seen as a word which does not have a clear lexical meaning in and of itself, but rather was contributing to embellish an expression by adding certain modal meaning (which might share some sense with the previous meaning the form had as a main verb, as Earle notes). Since it can help to make an expression more detailed, the word 'connotation' 'signification' or 'implication' was used to reflect its role in terms of 'meaning'. Grammarians also often adopted the word 'imply' or 'denote' to represent the modality of the modal auxiliary verb (e.g. Fell 1784, Webster 1784, Gough 1754, Jamieson 1818, Smith 1816).

The reason why a more semantic-like definition of the modal auxiliary verb is re-introduced below is as follows: we can notice that although a typical representation of the form-meaning combination for the modal auxiliary verb may suggest that each modal auxiliary verb can be identified with its own distinct meaning, it is pointed out that the modal auxiliary verbs can also overlap semantically. Previously, in chapter 2, section 2.5, the relation between semantic and pragmatic senses, and also between different pragmatic senses was discussed, but the existence of the relation between the semantic senses was dealt with less extensively. Just as was the case with the semantic-pragmatic correlation, and the pragmatic network associated with modals, the more semantic-like senses can also be connected to each other.

In the section on 'modality' (chapter 2, section 2.3.2) the well-known idea of modal logic (necessity and possibility) is described and applied to the use of the modals. However, there are a variety of semantic-based senses which are further attached to the modal auxiliary verbs, such as liberty, power, will, obligation, etc. In what follows below and in chapter 5, I show how many of the semantic senses are related to each other in a network. While such mutual connections can be identified, it is also important to point out that the senses which are indicated as the properties of single modal auxiliary verbs may be seen to overlap between different modal

auxiliary verbs, since there are discrepancies between the definitions of the semantic properties of each of the modal auxiliary verbs depending on authors. Below in Table 4.1, I provide a list which indicates what further senses are pointed out as the properties of each modal auxiliary verb. Although the sources are not extensive, the data collected from my corpus show a certain tendency towards agreement in correspondence of form and meaning.

**Table 4.1      Modals and accompanied senses**

<b>Modals</b>	<b>Characteristic senses</b>
<i>Will</i>	Inclination of the will, Anticipation, <u>Future</u> , <u>Desire</u> , Menace, <u>Promise</u> , Choice, Volition, <u>Command</u> , Resolution, Determination
<i>Shall</i>	<u>Necessity</u> , Intention, <u>Promise</u> , Duty, <u>Future</u> , <u>Permission</u> , Threat, <u>Command</u> , <u>Obligation</u> , Authority
<i>May</i>	<u>Possibility</u> , <u>Liberty</u> , <u>Potentiality</u> , Purpose, Doubt, Probability, <u>Capacity</u> , <u>Ability</u> , <u>Permission</u> , Wish, <u>Desire</u> , Advice, Right, <u>Power</u>
<i>Can</i>	<u>Power</u> , <u>Potentiality</u> , <u>Ability</u> , <u>Capacity</u> , <u>Liberty</u> , <u>Possibility</u> , Strength, Knowledge, Capability
<i>Must</i>	<u>Necessity</u> , <u>Potentiality</u> , <u>Obligation</u>

(Based on data from the following: Ballantyne 1847: 12-13; Walker 1805: 34; Gough 1754: 47-48; Smith 1816: 63; Angus 1862: 70; Connon 1845: 78; Webster 1784: 28, 30; Sweet 1903: 116; Sheridan 1780 vol.2; Meilan 1803: 61-62; Sutcliffe 1815: 55-56; Jamieson 1818: 36; Brown 1851: 346-347; Fell 1784: 167; Lennie 1827: 25-27; Lowth 1762: 62; Mackintosh 1797: 171; Ash 1763: 45; Anon 1841: 104, Harrison 1848: 258, Davis 1830: 93-94, Cornwallis 1847: 67; Daniel 1893: 77, 106, Priestley 1761: 22; Meiklejohn 1889: 49, emphasised by Obara)

The underlined words are those which appear in more than two of the grammar books in my corpus in descriptions of a single modal auxiliary verb, which suggests that the writers saw that there are many senses which are shared by different modal auxiliary verbs. In case of *must*, in particular, all the properties are shared by other modal auxiliary verbs. From this information, it is possible to understand that senses which are expressed by these modal auxiliary verbs can be quite similar, involving a range of common factors.

Since each modal auxiliary verb has a set of semantic meanings, and also as already suggested, since each of the semantic senses can be connected to others, this situation seems to suggest a certain 'web' which is composed of links between the senses of each the modal auxiliary verb forms. While such a semantic web, i.e. network, can be regarded as a collection of senses, there is in theory no limit to stop the expansion. From a historical perspective, semantic concepts have the potential to be further extended or linked via a connection to more pragmatic based concepts. Traugott (1989: 34-35) indicates three tendencies regarding the historical developmental process of semantic change, namely:

(5)

Tendency 1: Meanings based on an external description > meanings based on an internal (evaluative / perceptual / cognitive) perspective.

Tendency 2: Meanings based on the externally or internally described situation > meanings based on the textual and metalinguistic situation.

Tendency 3: Meanings tend to become increasingly based in the speaker's subjective belief state / attitude toward the proposition.

(Traugott 1989: 34-35)

The first tendency, a transition from an apparently objective interpretation to one more internalized, is illustrated as a transition from concrete to abstract. The

second tendency is a change from the literal to one based more on cultural knowledge. The third is a tendency which focuses more on the speaker's subjectivity and its relation to the propositional part of the expression. These changes are all relevant to the historical evolution of the modals, as I show later: that is, a tendency which became more subjectified, adopting more epistemic and expressive meanings (Traugott 1989). In addition, there is an indication by Leech (1987: 125-127) which shows the link between semantic and pragmatic aspects in terms of particular uses of the modal auxiliary verbs. In his explanation of particular hypothetical applications of the modal auxiliary verb, the more pragmatics-based 'hypotheticality' is connected to more semantic concepts of 'permission', 'volition' and 'possibility' as "hypothetical permission", "hypothetical volition" and "hypothetical possibility". Leech also suggests certain polite effect with this kind of use.

- (6) These special uses can best be explained in terms of psychological factors such as diffidence and tact. Hypothetical forms are substituted in order to tone down the meaning of the non-hypothetical auxiliary where it might be thought too bold or blunt.

#### Hypothetical Permission

*Could* and *Might* are often used as more polite alternatives to *can* and *may* in first-person requests:

- Might I ask you for your opinion?
- I wonder if we could borrow some tea.

#### Hypothetical Volition

The polite use of *would* instead of *will* (= 'willingness') in second- and third-person requests furnishes a further example of the absolute use of a hypothetical clause with verbs expressing desire:

- Would you lend me fifty pence?
- I wonder if someone would help me pitch this tent.

### Hypothetical Possibility

The hypothetical forms *could* and *might* are frequent as substitutes for *can* and *may* in expressing factual possibility:

- There could be trouble at the World Cup match tomorrow.
- The door might be locked already.
- Our team might still win the race.

(extracted from Leech 1987: 126-127)

Here we see a clearly how the semantic aspect is related to the pragmatic one, and also an association of politeness. Thus we see that there appears to be a clear connection between meanings (semantic, pragmatic), modality, and politeness.

So far in this section the topic has been more about the semantic aspect of the modal auxiliary verb. In the next section, I now look at the issues of pragmatics, in particular, politeness.

### 4.3 Polite concepts with the modal auxiliary verb

The purpose of the grammar book in the LModE period was basically to note aspects of the grammatical system of English for better understanding and proper use. Since to provide such a systematic, mechanical perspective which should work as the codification of the standard was the main concern in the emerging new society during this time, it is reasonable to estimate that the grammar book was not especially concerned with matters of politeness, or if it was, only as a side issue. As a result, we should not expect much description in terms of the relation between politeness and the modals in such texts. It is possible to confirm that this is a fact by looking at the present corpus.

However, this does not mean to suggest that uses of the modal auxiliary verb were not perceived as being related to politeness in the late Modern period. There



were also some other books which were published in the same period reflecting the social circumstances and demand, as described in chapter 3, especially in sections 3.1.2.1 to 3.1.2.3, namely the usage book and the manner book. We can see in such texts a description which tells the direct connection between polite expression and the use of the modal auxiliary verb, although this kind of information itself is rarely provided; also the explanation is not detailed regarding the particular relationship. As for the manner book, there are many polite related concepts including 'polite(ness)' itself described in such texts; nevertheless, politeness is not frequently and explicitly associated specifically with the modal auxiliary verb, or even particular language use more generally. Rather politeness is introduced in association with the manner of our linguistic expression more broadly, taken as a whole. However, it is possible to find certain implications which suggest that the modal auxiliary verb was perceived as a marker of politeness, from the assembled information of the contents of the grammar, usage and manner books.

### **4.3.1 Descriptions in the grammar book**

This section looks at the relationship between the modal auxiliary verb and the senses of politeness in Late Modern English grammar books. Although it is sometimes said that all modal auxiliary verbs are related to the expressions of politeness, the conditions which are indicated by grammarians are different depending on which modal auxiliary verb is being described. Also, there are some modal auxiliary verbs which are discussed relatively more frequently in grammar books than others. First, let's look at the situation in which each modal auxiliary verb is pointed out as having a polite use.

#### **4.3.1.1 *Should***

*Should* is the modal verb whose polite use was pointed out most frequently in the set of grammar books which form the corpus for this thesis. Two representative examples are given below.

- (7) A slight assertion, with modest diffidence, is sometimes made by the help of *should*; “I *should* think”, for “I am rather inclined to think”.

In the following examples it is elegantly redundant: “I *should* advice you to proceed”; “I *should* think it would succeed”; “he, it *should* seem, thinks otherwise”.

(Smith 1816: 63)

- (8) “It is so used to express a modest wish, request, or question, some such hypothetical clause as ‘if it were possible,’ ‘if you will allow me – give me’ being understood: *I should like a glass of water. ... I should like to go to too.*”

(Sweet 1903: 113)

These examples of Smith’s and Sweet’s clearly describe the role of the modal auxiliary verb as a factor of polite expression. We can see that the modal auxiliary verb *should* is used to represent ‘slight(ness)’, ‘modest(y)’, ‘diffidence’, ‘elegance’ and ‘hypotheticality’<sup>24</sup>. This is because the part which is interpreted as polite expression is added or represented by (the effect of) the modal auxiliary verb. For instance, in case of the first example above, ‘I should think’ is interpreted as ‘I am rather inclined to think. It may be suggested that the modal auxiliary works as very much similar to the terms of respect in Japanese in the sense that it alone functions to represent politeness in such examples.’<sup>25</sup> Ballantyne (1847: 13) also indicates such a point. His description is based on a distinction between the propositional and modifying parts of an utterance, with *should* as the modifying part. Ballantyne says that the implication of *should* can be “modest expression of opinion” in expressions such as the following: “I should say you paid too much.”

<sup>24</sup> A fuller discussion of hypotheticality was provided in section 2.5.1.1.

<sup>25</sup> These are terms of respect whose role is exclusively to mark politeness (Nakano et al 1997, Kikuchi 1997, cf. section 3.2.3 in chapter 3).

There are other descriptions, both prior to and contemporary with that of Ballantyne, which point out the role of *should* as a marker of polite expressions. White (1761: 231) tells that *should* “politely marks the event as involuntary or accidental”. While White directly connects the modal auxiliary verb to the word ‘polite’, he also introduces some other senses such as hypotheticality, conditionality, futurity, doubt, and precariousness as the effects created by *should* in a given clause (1761: 232). It seems possible that these senses can be connected to factors of politeness since a certain indirectness often accompanies a polite sense. Likewise, although there is no example sentence provided, another polite related sense, ‘soften’, is described as an effect which is brought about by *should* by Latham (1841: 502). Such senses which are indicated as being related to the implications which arise from use of the modal auxiliary verb can often be regarded as or connected to face-work. It is quite clear to see how concepts here such as ‘hypothetical’, ‘conditional’, ‘futurity’, ‘doubt’ and ‘soften’ are related to somewhat ‘weakened’ or ‘indirect’ requests or commands. These senses are more modest, gentle, and also polite than those which do not involve any redressive action to protect the face of the person who is spoken to.

#### 4.3.1.2 *Would*

Ramsay (1892: 399) introduces a discussion of a hedging<sup>26</sup> expression which involves *would*, namely ‘It would seem’. He says that our sense of modesty is displayed by this expression, analysing the interpretation in the following way:

- (9) I beg pardon ten thousand times for venturing to intimate that possibly it seems.

Ramsay (1892: 399)

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<sup>26</sup> The meaning of the word ‘hedge’ as it is used in politeness theory is related to meanings associate with uses of the word in other types of discourse, including senses such as ‘a boundary often formed by bushes or shrubs to divide land’ and ‘the action adopted to avoid possible loss in investment’. These both denote things or actions which work as a buffer, for protection, but can be transferred to the world of discourse structure and politeness: when hedging expressions are uttered, the speaker is attempting to set up a ‘mental buffer’ in order to be considerate to the person who is spoken to.

In another example, Sweet (1903: 113) points out two expressions which adopt *would* as a marker of modesty:

- (10) *wouldn't you rather have a cup of tea?*  
*he says he would like to go for a walk.*

(Sweet 1903: 113)

The former provides a good example for establishing the relationship between the propositional and modifying parts. The core propositional part to be conveyed within this expression is 'it seem(s)'. As far as Ramsay's interpretation is concerned, *would* corresponds to the modifying part "I beg pardon ten thousand times for venturing to intimate that possibly", which sounds almost excessively considerate to the person who is spoken to. It is clear that *would* functions as a politeness marker here.

#### 4.3.1.3 *Might*

The indication of the polite use with *might* in some of the grammar books might give us an impression that the modal auxiliary verb is particularly polite in its use as request (cf. also the observations by Leech in (6) above).

- (11) The combination *might* + infinitive in independent sentences is used to soften a request by making it more indirect, as in  
*might I ask...? / might I be allowed to ask... ?*

(Sweet 1903: 116)

Sweet explains the polite use (or softening function) of *might* only when it appears in the larger discourse context of making of a request. Requests which include a modal auxiliary verb are also pointed out as more indirect by grammarians today: for example, Swan (1995: 159-160, 507-508) indicates the polite use with

*could*, *would* and *might* in requests, while both Fraser (1978) and Kashino (2002) also treat requests as a representative of politeness when they appear with modal auxiliary verbs. It seems that they regard requests differently from interrogatives in general, since interrogatives are more about form (e.g. typically involving subject-auxiliary inversion), while requests may be considered as kinds of functional directives, that typically have the form of interrogatives.

Fell (1784: 178) is another grammarian who introduces the ‘gentle’ use of a request with *might* in his description of the uses of the modals. He also, however, indicates another use of *might* as “a desire of some thing possible”. Although there is no word which seems more directly to imply politeness in the description of this second use of *might*, does this really have no relation to politeness? Let’s look at the example Fell provides which represents the use introduced here.

- (12) might you dispense with your leisure, I would by and by have  
some speech with you.

(Fell 1784: 178)

This is quite tricky to classify because this can be taken both as request and desire. While both request and desire relate to future states (the hope for something yet to come, and the means by which this might be brought about); this futurity (associated with incompleteness) relates to hypotheticality (although desire might be easier to connect to hypotheticality than request is). Note too that *might* here occupies the same structural position as the conditional marker *if*. As was noted in the discussion of *should* above, hypotheticality induces indirectness and eventually politeness. Again, there emerges another dynamic marking the network between words and their meanings. The linkage between the concepts associated with such words makes it possible to connect certain senses which are not directly associated with individual word meanings. We can see another dynamic, creative dimension of linking between (modal, polite) factors here.

#### 4.3.1.4 *Could*

A description which explains the mutual connection between politeness and *could* can rarely be seen in the grammar book in the Late Modern English period. This may seem particularly strange when compared with the frequent use or adoption of *could* to express politeness today. In Kashino's (2002) study of polite expressions, the phrase 'could you...?' is regarded as a marker of a highly polite directive (see chapter 3, section 3.1.1). As far as the evidence from the grammar books is concerned, it would seem there has been no drastic change since the Late Modern English period. This means that – according to the grammarians – the style and use of this modal as an expression of politeness in English is almost the same throughout the time after the beginning of the Late Modern English period. This poor information about *could* and its relation to politeness may seem quite a contrast to the frequent adoption as a typical example of polite expression in the grammar book nowadays (cf. Swan 1995: 159-160, 206, 507-508)<sup>27</sup>.

Latham (1841: 502) provides one example which establishes the connection between *could* and polite use. He suggests that *could* can be used to soften the expression of power together with the polite use of another modal auxiliary verb *might*.

- (13) The assertion of 'duty' or obligation is one of those assertions which men like to soften in the expression: should, ought. So is the expression of 'power', as denoted by *may* or *can* – *might, could*. Very often when we say 'you should (or ought to) do this', we leave to be added by implication – 'but you do not.'

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<sup>27</sup> One thing which we should bear in mind here is that the contemporary grammar book by Swan has slightly different educational aim, because it targets a different audience: the primary target of the book is rather foreigners who are learning English as a second or other language. Therefore, it must be better to recognise the different readerships of the grammar books in different periods. By and large the one aimed at the foreign market seems to be more concerned with matters of form. I assume from my experience as a foreign learner of English that more clearly defined form – function / meaning combinations or correspondences are easier to memorise.

Very often when we say ‘I could (or might) do this, we leave to be added by implication – ‘but I do not exert my power.’

(Latham 1841: 502)

It should be noted that the use of the preterit form of the modal auxiliary verbs as markers of hypotheticality, and the connection of such uses to politeness, can also be confirmed in Late Modern English grammars (see chapter 2, section 2. 4. 2). For example, Murray describes the preterit form of the modal auxiliary verb as a whole as “generally conditional”, a form which “is elegantly used to express a very slight assertion, with a modest diffidence.” (Murray 1808: 136-137) The point is that in cases where *could* is used for the purpose of softening an utterance, i.e. politeness, the modal auxiliary verb works as the main modifier whose role is specialised for a polite effect. Moreover the condition that the polite sense generated by the preterit modal auxiliary verbs modifies the propositional part is commonly found in almost every situation. This seems to give us an impression that the modal auxiliary verbs are not exactly like the terms of respect in Japanese.

#### 4.3.1.5 *Shall*

*Shall* is also another modal auxiliary verb which independently is not identified very frequently as a marker of politeness in the grammar books which constitute my corpus. I have found only one example, but it makes the connection between the use of this modal and politeness very clear:

- (14) There is a general impression that “I *shall*” is less explicit and self-asserting – hence more modest - than “I *will*”

The distinction is not one of grammar but of politeness.

(Ramsay 1892: 391)

In this explanation, it is clear that politeness is related to the fact that *shall* makes the rest of the utterance ‘less explicit’, ‘less self-asserting’ and ‘modest’. The



nature of the description and discussion by Fell is also very revealing. First *shall* is explained as a word which works to modify the other part of the expression to make it less assertive. Then, by the adoption of the word 'hence', Fell suggests that the association of *shall* with modesty is a consequence of this primary association; in other words, 'modesty' falls out from, or is secondary to, the softening of the illocutionary force of the utterance. Finally, the effects or implications which *shall* brings about are related to or categorised into 'politeness'. Thus, a sort of chain reaction reveals the multi layered conceptualisation which surrounds the connection between the modal auxiliary verb and politeness. In addition, here Ramsay indicates that politeness and grammar are located in different domains. He is explicitly separating out grammar from use, showing how the modals may be used as interpersonal markers of social relations. This seems to explain why the word 'politeness' can rarely be seen in the description in many of the earlier grammar books of the Late Modern English period; but we can nonetheless see the emergence of such a discussion in the period.

#### 4.3.1.6 *Will*

*Will* is, again, another modal auxiliary verb which is rarely directly connected to politeness in the explanation of its use. Nevertheless, there is one example which shows the connection between *will* and politeness. It seems that this example is a good one to illustrate the connections between the numerous factors which surround polite usage. The example is provided by Head (1856: 26). The modal auxiliary verb *will* is related to several politeness-related words which is quite typical of the period. It should also be worth noting that from the description, Head discusses the use of the modal auxiliary verb *will* from the perspective of the speaker's conceptualization of events. This somewhat personalised affect is a reflection of the subjectification associated with the historical process of the grammaticalization of the modal verbs, which was on-going during the Late Modern English period (cf. Traugott 1989, Traugott and König 1991).

- (15) I ought to notice another use of *will*, in addressing a person, which represents a courteous form of the imperative. In conveying official instructions to a subordinate officer – “you will see that proper precautions are taken,” means, in fact, “I direct you to see,” etc.

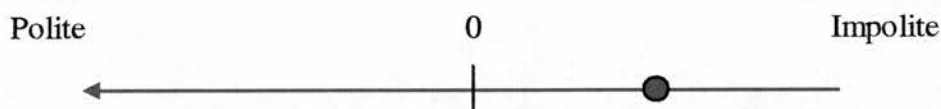
This is, I conceive, simply the use of the future for the imperative; inasmuch as the superior assumes that the party addressed will do that which is his duty, and he foretells what that will be, instead of ordering him to do it.

(Head 1856: 26)

Here at first glance the description of the function of *will* may not sound particularly polite, but it clearly is in comparison to the imperative form *See that proper precautions are taken*, which is clearly more face threatening. The expression which includes *will* here is another variety or form whose role is as a directive. The imperative expression must basically be regarded as imposing a burden, and to impose a burden is not protective of the addressee’s negative ‘face’. However, the point is that the issue of politeness is a matter of degree. There can be varying dimensions of politeness, which means that even if an expression is regarded as not-so-polite, or face-threatening, if there is another comparative means of expression which risks even greater damage to the addressee’s face, the first should be regarded as more polite compared to the second (assuming that both have the same communicative function). Politeness is composed of multiple dimensions, and is relative. Even if an expression is not polite in one particular aspect, the expression can be regarded as polite in another. Therefore, when an expression is regarded immediately as impolite, as in Figure 4.1:

**Figure 4.1<sup>28</sup> A cline of politeness**

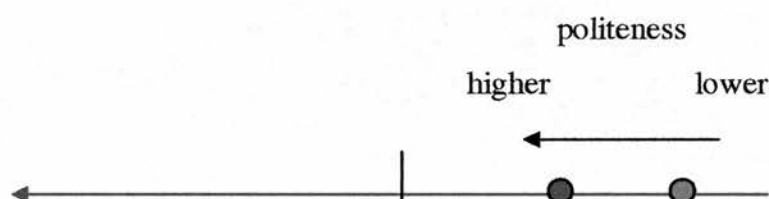
The first impression of expression



it might still be considered as more polite compared to another (see figure 4.2).

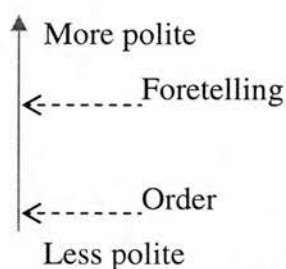
**Figure 4.2 A cline of politeness**

A relative impression

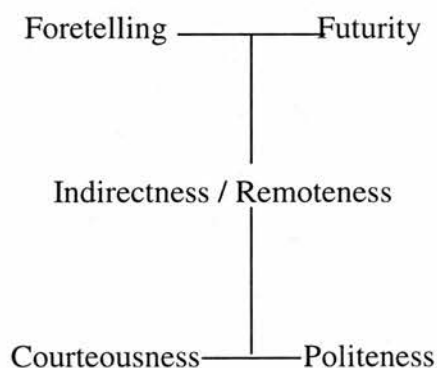


In such a context of use, it is assumed that a series of related factors connect with each other. Regarding the related factors associated with this specific example, the prototypical or default imperative is an 'order', as Head says. On the other hand, the alternative expression with *will* is regarded differently as 'foretell(ing)'. The movement from order to foretelling means an increase of the degree of politeness.

<sup>28</sup> The circle means the point at which the value or degree of the expression is placed regarding politeness.

**Figure 4.3 A cline of politeness**

The foretelling is indicated by the use of some ‘future’ marker. Furthermore, ‘futurity’ produces a certain sense of indirectness or remoteness (see chapter 2, section 2.5.1.2). As for ‘indirectness’ for example, as already introduced in the discussion of *might* above, it is a key mediating concept which connects the modal auxiliary verb to a sense of politeness. Such an indirect or remote sense works as a ‘politeness buffer’ when it appears in a particular utterance (cf. chapter 2: section 2.4.2 and 2.5). The buffering function must be connected to a ‘courteous’ sense which can be regarded one of the concepts of politeness – see figure 4.4

**Figure 4.4 Politeness and related senses**

As a result, now it is possible to see the related compositional arrangement of the related factors (above). This shows that related senses of politeness with the modal auxiliary verb seem to have the potential to cover diverse concepts. Such a

pattern could be replicated for other modals analysed here, and this issue is discussed in more detail in chapter 5.

#### 4.3.1.7 *May*

As for the polite uses of *may*, Angus (1812: 70) provides the following example:

- (16) *May* is elegantly used in asking a question, to soften the boldness of an inquiry; “How old may you be?”

(Angus 1812: 70)

*May* therefore has a certain role which softens an expression and makes it elegant. The related word ‘elegant’, together with ‘modest’, ‘courteous’, etc., is one of the frequently adopted indicators of politeness in the Late Modern English period (see chapter 2, section 2.5.3.2 and chapter 3, section 3.1). Maetzner (1874 vol.2: 130) tells us that an expression which includes *may* (also *will*, *shall* and even ‘let’) is “regarded as an unreal one or as one not realised, and as a conceded, striven for, occasioned or requested activity, according to the nature of the construction”. The sense ‘unreal’ and ‘not realised’ are related to possibility, remoteness or indirectness, or even some hypotheticality, which as we have seen are all concerned with the related concept of politeness (see chapter 2, section 2.5.1.1, and elsewhere in this section). Hypotheticality is often introduced as a particular property of the preterit form of the modal auxiliary verb (see again chapter 2, section 2.5.1.1., and above on *could*), but now we can see that some grammarians believed that such a modal sense might not necessarily be restricted to such forms. As the discussion in this section notes, connections between the modal senses can be open-ended. As far as this modal network is concerned, it is perfectly in order to suggest that hypotheticality may be connected to the present form of the modal auxiliary verb even if the connection is weak as a consequence of its unentrenched, less frequently established state.

In this regard, there are actually a couple of authors of books in the present corpus who clearly indicate the connection between the present form and hypotheticality. Fell (1784: 159-191) in an appendix entitled ‘A Dissertation on the Nature and Peculiar Use of Certain Hypothetical Verbs in the English Language’, adopts the words “hypothetical verbs” to represent the modal auxiliary verbs: *shall*, *will*, *may*, *can*, *should*, *would*, *might* and *could*. Maetzner (1874) holds a similar position. He suggests that, depending on the context in which the modal auxiliary verb appears, the connections between the modal verb forms and modal senses may be rather flexibly established, and sometimes admit of exceptions. For instance, in Maetzner’s explanation above, while the sense ‘conceded’ (e.g. as yielding to others) may be related to some moderate or modest sense which seems to be quite a significant aspect of politeness, ‘striven for’ and ‘occasioned’ do not fit well into this category.

#### 4.3.1.8 *Can*

After citing several authors’ works which includes expressions with *can*, mainly in the 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> centuries such as Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden and Pope, White introduces a discussion of the modal senses which are associated with *can* (1761: 181).

- (17) In all these passages, not mere Natural Power strength or force is referr’d to, or can be so with any degree of truth: but power as limited guided and directed by decency, becomingness, virtue, integrity, or otherwise; which is Moral Power.

(White 1761: 181)

The main thing to observe here is that White indicates that *can* can be associated with ‘decency’, ‘becomingness’, ‘virtue’ and ‘integrity’ all of which lead to politeness. ‘Becomingness’ was central to the conventional, culturally specific and learned aspect of politeness at that time, while ‘decency’, ‘virtue’ and ‘integrity’

seem to be associated more with universal politeness. Here again it is possible to see that politeness is a complex phenomenon, involving an intersection of numerous factors. White further raises an example which is specified as the expression of 'decency' or 'propriety' with *can* (1761: 184), exemplified by the following quotation from Pope:

- (18) Unwilling as I am, of force I stay,  
       'Till THETIS bring me, at the dawn of day,  
       VULCANIAN arms; what other *can* I wield,  
       Except the mighty TELAMONIAN shield?

(White 1761: 184)

What is discussed as the main role of *can* here is the dynamic modality associated with 'power' and 'ability'. 'Power', at a glance, might not so easily be related to politeness in general. However, with this example of the Late Modern English period, we can recognise that 'power' can be connected to moral issues, and also resultantly politeness.

Modern grammarians argue that the dynamic (modality) which is expressed by *can* does not seem to be regarded actually as a modality (Huddleston 2002: 177-178; Gisborne 2007). The gist of their arguments is that the dynamic sense is more likely to be regarded as a part of the propositional content of the clause itself; therefore, it rarely reflects the subjective attitude of the speaker which works on the propositional part. Recall that modality is basically defined as the speaker's mind or attitude which modifies the default factuality of the proposition of expression (see chapter 2, section 2.3.2). The resultant effect of it is reflected in the pragmatic interpretation of the utterance in a social context. (I suppose that the speaker's attitude itself more or less has already been affected by social and cultural circumstances since it seems difficult to have the individual's values without an indexical idea of social norm.) The personal attitude and the pragmatic idea appeal to the sense of politeness which is based on the aspects of human interaction in



society. Here there emerges a relationship between modality, the human mind, pragmatics and politeness.

#### 4.3.1.9 *Must*

‘Necessity’. This single word is used commonly by almost all the grammarians in my corpus to describe what *must* means or represents. In such a situation, only some authors provide a definition of what kind of necessity *must* denotes. With such detailed information, still, it is possible to relate the sense ‘necessity’ to ‘politeness’, and therefore the modal auxiliary verb *must* and ‘politeness’.

The concept ‘necessity’ might also seem difficult to connect with ‘politeness’ at first, since we associate ‘necessity’ with something ‘forced’ or ‘compelled’ which can impose a burden on the person the speaker is speaking to, i.e. violate the face of the addressee. However, the connection between the factors of modal senses is very flexible and diverse as we have seen, and such a first impression does not necessarily mean that the connection between necessity and politeness is immediately denied. Actually, it is possible to find certain routes through which the two are connected. Consider the citation below which explains the nature of necessity of *must*.

- (19) The Sign here always imports necessity of a Natural, Moral,  
Social, or Political kind

(White 1761: 249)

This tells us that the source of the necessity originates from a variety of aspects which can be divided into two groups: spontaneous or innate, and external. While it is easy to consider that ‘natural’ is in the former group and ‘social’ and ‘politics’ are in the latter, ‘moral’ can be in both depending on context. The common thing which can be said throughout all of these must be that there is no, or at least a reduced sense of personal subjectivity. It is estimated that the characteristic of the necessity of *must* is ‘non-subjective’. Actually, there are other descriptions which

support this perspective. Cornwallis (1847: 69) says that *must* denotes “an abstract necessity”, and compares the necessity with the one of *shall* as its contrastive object.

- (20) “He *shall*” has so far reference to the speaker, as to imply, that he will himself enforce his command:  
 “he *must*” has reference only to the person spoken of, who may be coerced by some circumstance over which the speaker possibly may have no control.

(Cornwallis 1847: 70)

It is interesting to see that this view of the modal auxiliary verb(s) is slightly different from the one taken in the current study. Huddleston (2002: 183) points out that *must* can be subjective or objective depending on context. Coates (1983: 32-33) also indicates that the epistemic aspect of *must* reflects subjectivity and the root uses reflect objectivity. On the other hand, Palmer (1990: 53, 72-73, 113) claims that the epistemic and deontic uses of *must* are more subjective and the dynamic one is more objective. This contrast between subjective and objective is echoed in another description from the nineteenth century.

- (21) *Must* usually expresses a general, undefined necessity or propriety, not, like *shall*, the authority of a superior.  
*Must* is also used where the necessity is not of doing anything, but of believing something on the evidence of circumstances.

(Ramsay 1892: 402)

All in all, even though there are not so many examples, it is possible to find descriptions which rather closely or even directly relate each of the modal auxiliary verbs to the senses of politeness. In addition, certain flexible, dynamic action of linking between modal senses enhances the credibility of the possible connections which relates the use of the modal auxiliary verbs and politeness. This is what we

can understand from the information of the grammar book in the Late Modern English period.

#### 4.3.2 Descriptions in the usage / manner book

The description of the connection between politeness and the modal auxiliary verb in the manner and the usage books is fairly different from the one in the grammar book. In effect, there is almost no account which focuses exclusively on the existence of the relationship between politeness and the modal auxiliary verb. However, it is also true that even the description which shows the existence of a rather close connection between a particular linguistic expression (not necessarily the modal auxiliary verb) and politeness is rarely seen in the corpus of these guide books I have examined. Of course, it is also true that there is no description which denies the existence of the relation between the politeness and the modal auxiliary verb.

There are some manner books which particularly deal with aspects of language. However, these books discuss politeness generally (how a certain class of human should behave politely), but they do not always mention specific words and expressions. For example, *How to speak with Propriety* (Oxoniensis 1856) provides the following description.

- (22) The very fact of speaking or writing with propriety will always depend upon the more or less accurate knowledge of grammar which we may possess. Moreover, although custom, and the society of the learned and polite, will always induce a general correctness in speech, yet that correctness is by no means certain and sure.

(Oxoniensis 1856: 6)

This sounds quite bland, admitting generally that politeness is a linguistic phenomenon, but such texts typically lack detailed information like concrete examples of expression, etc. *English Prose* (Earle 1890) also deals with that aspect

of usage which was commonly regarded as 'proper' English, but again, the description style, while explanatory, provides only generalities. *The Queen's English* (Alford 1870) and *Reflections on the English Language* (Baker 1770) are similar texts. Although their main subjects are the English language and its proper use, it is hard to find something which discusses explicitly the relation between politeness and the modal auxiliary verb.

When we look at the manner book more generally, the contents are even less specific, shifting the focus further from language. The manner book normally treats manners which broadly exist in society. Therefore, the focus of the book is on people's general behaviour and attitude. Conduct codes and etiquette for certain occasions are described. *Mentoria: or, The Young Ladies Instructor, in Familiar Conversations on Moral and Entertaining Subjects* (Murry 1778) as a dialogue style provides a particular description whereby an instructor (Mentoria) talks about what young ladies should have in mind regarding their attitude and behaviour. As for the part which deals with politeness, the following advice is provided: "There are very few improper, if they are presented with modest diffidence, and in deference to superior judgment" under the title of Dialogue III 'On politeness, Civility, and Gratitude; their essential qualities enumerated; and the Practice of them strongly recommended'. The information provided there is rather general, mainly about attitude, not an illustration of more concrete, specific action or behaviour like particular linguistic expressions. *The Lady's Reader* (Vandenhoff 1862) is similar, but it is more explanatory. The information available is quite poor in terms of details; a typical example is as follows:

- (23) Grace of speech is particularly attractive in woman.

The speaking of her native language with purity and elegance of pronunciation, in an agreeable tone of voice, with a sparkling accentuation and an easy, fluent, utterance are

distinguishing marks of a good education, and carry with them the 'prestige' of refinement and high breeding.

(Vandenhoff 1862: v)

While concepts such as 'purity' and 'elegance', 'prestige' and 'refinement' are pointed out as the factors which mark out what was conceived of as the 'right' kind of behaviour in a woman, they are connected only to more general, non-specific aspects of language, most of which are phonologically based: 'pronunciation', 'tone', 'accentuation' and 'utterance'. In other words, language is viewed comprehensively, not focusing on the details of the lexical, textual aspect in great detail. Possibly because of this, it is difficult to provide a significant number of examples which connect usage of the modal auxiliary verb with issues of politeness.

Other books such as *Fragments on Politeness* (Anon 1870) and *A Day with One of The Committees* (Stapleton 1876) also have broad perspectives, and do not specifically dig into the formal, structural linguistic aspect, although they do mention issues of politeness. *The Rules of Civility* (Anon 1703) is similar. The descriptions in chapter 1 outline the general tenor of the text as a whole:

- (24) The Design of this Treatise, and in what Civility consists. Civility, which we propose to treat of in this book, is nothing but the Modesty and *Decorum* that every Man ought to observe both in his Words and Actions.

(Anon 1703: 1)

- (25) So then, to complete our selves in true *Politeness*, we need go no farther than the Rules of Civility; and that Civility being nothing but a certain Modesty and courteous Disposition which is to accompany us in all our Actions, we could not more usefully discourse of any other Virtue, (supposed we were able) considering this directs us to the acquisition of a

thing, that conciliates Applause, and the Affection of the whole World.

(Anon 1703: 3)

Although there is some vague reference to language in the two examples above, basically the main concern of the text as a whole is about a broad, general attitude and behaviour associated with politeness. Thus, politeness in English culture was sometimes illustrated by reference to a specific linguistic component, e.g. the modal auxiliary verb, on the one hand; and on the other, the concept was also connected to more general aspects of behaviour and attitude holistically. It might be possible to say that there was no particular domain to which politeness was especially linked; there was no unique linguistic place in which politeness lodges.

The usage book normally provides an indication of what is the right use and treatment of particular words and expressions. In this case, the content is described mainly based on a more semantic oriented perspective rather than a pragmatic one. For example, *Observations on The Use of the Words Shall and Will* (Anon 1813) explains the function of *will* and *shall* by adopting conceptual factors such as 'volition', 'resolution', 'threatening', 'promising', 'choice', 'future', etc., but does not mention more pragmatic issues such as 'politeness', 'hypotheticality', and the like. Some examples of the itemized description are provided below.

(26) Rule 5. In giving positive orders we use will, as expressive of will and authority.

Rule 6. In promising we use will.

Rule 7. In offering assistance or accommodation we use will, as expressing readiness to oblige.

Rule 8. To express mental exertion we use will.

Rule 9. In threatening we use the future with power.

(Anon 1813: 14-17)

This type of more semantic based description can also be seen in Fell's (1784) appendix at the end of his grammar book. It might be suggested that this style is

typical of the authors of the grammar books in the Late Modern English period, and that this anonymous author used such texts as models for a particular usage book. Although it is hard to see more concrete pragmatic examples, it is possible to have a glimpse of the links and associations between the semantic factors listed. Rule 9 is a good example to confirm this. There 'threaten', 'future' and 'power' are involved as factors which influence the interpretation of such forms. We can see that the semantic associations overlap with each other. In terms of the history of the grammatical tradition, this can be a preparatory step for connecting such semantics to more pragmatic issues associated with language in use. This is because the description in the books which treat modality or pragmatics normally interweave such explanations with a series of more semantic factors (e.g. Coates 1983; Palmer 1990, 2001; Huddleston 2002).

Some specific examples which treated the issue of the relation between politeness and the modal auxiliary verb do exist, although I found that this kind of description was quite rare. Look at the following citation.

- (27) Polite letter-writers often say, '*I shall have great pleasure in accepting your invitation.*' Here, the act of accepting being present, the present tense, 'I have,' is required, but the blunder is probably due to '*I shall have great pleasure in coming,*' which is perfectly correct. Akin to this mistake is the use of 'would be' for 'is' in –  
 'Surely it *would be* desirable that some person who knew Sir Walter... should be charged with this article.' –MACAULAY to Napier, 1838, quoted in Life, &c. (1876), vol. ii. ch. Vii. P. 8. ['It *is* desirable,' but 'it *would be* a good thing.']

(Hodgson 1889: 95-96)

In this explanation, Hodgson is concerned with issues of written expression, taking courtesy to others, that is, politeness into consideration. But the facts



regarding modality and tense are nonetheless relevant. Here there are two expressions which are contrasted.

- 1) *shall* have great pleasure in accepting (your invitation)
- 2) *shall* have great pleasure in coming

With 1), the time of utterance is, of course, 'now', which also corresponds to the time of event, i.e. accepting the invitation. As a result, both the two aspects: utterance and event share the time 'now'. This expression is regarded as 'properly polite'. On the other hand, as for the matter with 2), the time of utterance is likewise 'now'; but the time of event 'coming' is future because the action 'coming' does not happen until the speaker, as the invited person, actually visits the addressee. When the two expressions are compared, it is possible to argue that the use of *shall* in 1) seems to emphasise its polite property more than its marking of some aspect of time. In 2) the use of *shall* is concerned more with 'futurity' marking. In short, *shall* in examples like 1) tends to be more of a politeness marker, and in examples like 2) is more of a future marker. This kind of indication, i.e. the comparison between futurity and politeness, is rarely found in similar texts in the period. If 'futurity' is regarded as more conventional, and 'politeness' as more emergent, in terms of the use of the modal auxiliary verb *shall*, it seems possible to argue the conceptualisation with *shall* had developed from futurity to politeness.

In sum, although descriptions which show explicitly the nature of the modal auxiliary verb as a marker of politeness are not numerous in the grammar, manner and usage books discussed above, it is true that we can infer the existence of this connection in these and related discussions of modality in the Late Modern English period. I explore this in the next section.

### 4.3.3 Politeness as a choice in a variety of properties of the dynamic conceptualisation with the modal auxiliary verb

As is well known, the function of the modal element is to modify the force of the propositional part of the utterance. This is similar to the one category of the terms of respect in Japanese. However, as noted above, the connection between politeness and the modal auxiliary verb or the view which regards the modal auxiliary verb as a marker of politeness is hard to find in the usage and manner books. Even if we can find some description (e.g. Hodgson 1889: 95-96, also see 4.3.2 above), which aligns the modal auxiliary verb with politeness or polite-related things, the precise content of the explanation of the relationship between the modal auxiliary verb and politeness is not clear enough to suggest to us that the authors unambiguously regarded the word as a marker of politeness. This is quite different regarding the treatment of the terms of respect in Japan. In Japan, most of the usage and manner books primarily account for the terms of respect (e.g. Chitekiseikatsukenkyujyo 2003, Ueda 2004, Shimizu and Arimura 1999, Ogata 2006, Karasawa 2007, Naito 2007, Hongo 2006)<sup>29</sup>.

One of the outcomes of the recognition of the different uses of the modal auxiliary verb in English and the terms of respect in Japanese is that the modal auxiliary verb is applied to other uses or expressions besides politeness. Example (28) provides one clear instance which can show the wide applicability of the modal auxiliary verb which is difficult to find in the use of the terms of respect in Japanese. Ramsay (1892: 390, 393-4), discussing the deontic force of *shall*, notes that certain authoritative nuances sometimes need to be softened:

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<sup>29</sup> Of course, the reasons for such differences existing are numerous: in addition to the fact that present-day Japanese and Late Modern English have radically different systems, there is also the possibility that there exist different cultural and educational practices in terms of what is expected from a book on polite language. Nevertheless, the importance of the proper use of the terms of respect in Japanese regarding polite manner cannot be overestimated. It is not an overstatement to say that the terms of respect represent most of politeness for native Japanese speakers. Their exclusive use as markers of politeness, to represent respect shows, as Hudson (1996) suggests, a series of connections between language, society and thought.

- (28) *Shall* is properly used only by the power that can enforce it.

'I have no right to say that a felon *shall* be hanged.'

Hence *shall* is a harsh word, and at best requires a deal of sweetening.

So, instead of saying "You *shall*, persons in authority are now much in the habit of saying "You *will please*," ...

(Ramsay 1892: 390, emphasis added)

- (29) We... 'demand, order, require, provide,' that it *shall* be.

Thus...; the intentional exercise of power or authority over another by *shall*'

(Ramsay 1892: 394, emphasis added)

Here Ramsay argues that:

- (a) *shall* is perceived as face-threatening, and that FTAs may be redressed by using *will please* instead
- (b) nonetheless, a declarative with *shall* (e.g. *You shall clean this house*) may be perceived as less threatening to the addressee's face than the imperative form (e.g. *Clean this house*)
- (c) the polysemy I have observed with *shall* (and other modal auxiliary verbs) does not apply to the markers of respect in Japanese, and this is a significant difference.

This also seem to correspond to the idea that the conceptualisation of politeness (and other modal senses) with the modal auxiliary verb varies depending on use and context, as a matter of degree, part of which can be confirmed in the discussion in the section 4.3.1.6 in this thesis

As Ramsay (1892: 397) suggests, it is difficult to limit the meanings of the modal auxiliary verb in general, so it must be important to accept the flexible and dynamic nature of the category. A polite sense or use is just one of the diverse possible interpretations of such forms. The next section discusses more about the

unique aspects of the use of the modal auxiliary verb from the perspective of grammaticalization.

#### 4.4 Modals, politeness and grammaticalization

Davis (1830) made the following observations about the animacy of the subject of a modal auxiliary verb:

- (30) The prosecution of analogy has extended the application of these signs to objects which cannot be in the state denoted by the literal meaning of each;

‘The work shall stop’

‘a stone will fall’

‘iron may break’

we do not mean, that the work is under an obligation to stop, of the same nature with that in which a debtor stands to his creditor; or that stone is determined to fall, as a man determines his will, or forms a resolution; or that the iron is in a state of ability to break, as a man, or a living creature, has the ability to do, or not to do, a thing at pleasure.

Nevertheless, there is an analogy between the states of ‘obligation’, and of ‘resolution’, and of ‘capacity’ in men; and the states in which ‘the work’ – ‘the stone’ – and ‘the iron’, are.

And this analogy is sufficient to warrant the application of the signs in the large extent of acceptation in which they are generally used.

(Davis 1830: 95)

His observations - that the 'obligation', 'resolution' and 'capacity' semantics of some of the modal auxiliary verbs cannot be directly applied to the non-human objects, but are nonetheless related – are of relevance to this thesis. As stated in the description above, it is reasonable to suggest that certain pragmatic senses such as politeness are associated with non-human entities only by analogy. Here we can see that modal senses work differently between human and non-human objects. Besides the complicated interactions between the semantic and pragmatic factors, there seem to be other differentiations between the human and non-human distinction. The examples in (6) in section 4.2 above suggest that the sense of politeness can be detected in the hypothetical uses of the modal auxiliary verb, and the examples includes ones whose subjects are non-human (hypothetical possibility). This suggests that both human and non-human subjects can appear in utterances which are marked for politeness. The two relevant examples from (6), repeated below as (31), are:

- (31) · There could be trouble at the World Cup match tomorrow.  
 · The door might be locked already.

(Leech 1987: 127)

Leech's explanation of the polite sense which is attached to the possibility use is the following.

- (32) The effect of the hypothetical auxiliary, with its implication 'contrary to expression,' is to make the expression of possibility more tentative and guarded. *Our team might still win the race* could be paraphrased *It is barely possible that...* or *It is possible, though unlikely, that....*

(Leech 1987: 127)

But it is at least true to generalise that modality reflects the speaker's mental attitudes more or less in all cases (i.e. irrespective of the animacy of the subject).

This thesis has already demonstrated how modal senses were regarded as part of mood (system of the grammar) by Late Modern English grammarians (see chapter 2). While mood was viewed generally as something through which the speaker's mind was reflected (e.g. Earle 1898: 42), many of the modal senses with which this thesis mainly deal concern the subjunctive (or potential) mood. In English a variety of senses associated with the subjunctive (or potential) mood are represented by some of the set of modal auxiliary verbs (Davis 1830: 105; Brown 1851: 322. 351; Harrison 1848: 248); therefore, I wish to explore how distinctive states of the human mind (especially with regard to subjectivity) in which politeness is involved is associated with such verbal forms.

#### 4.4.1 Modals and subjectivity

While Marsh (1860: 351) suggests that "with respect to precision of expression, or the nice discrimination of delicate distinctions of thought and shades of sentiment", it is "the auxiliary determines the sense", it is also said that similar semantics may be associated with what are usually classified as main or lexical verbs (cf. Latham 1841: 468). For example, certain lexical verbs such as *think*, *imagine* and *see* can represent our mental states. Thompson and Mulac (1991) argue that the nuance which can be interpreted with the verb *think* in the phrase *I think* has taken on a more subjective meaning in addition to its use as a complement to introduce a main clause or proposition with more neutral sense. They point out that this is due to the emergence of a more epistemic sense as a result of the process of grammaticalization, which involves an ellipsis of *that* after *think*. Kearns (2007) also supports this standpoint saying that *think* and also other similar verbs such as *feel* and *believe* have become more adverbial-like. The word 'adverbial' is meant to be equated with the function which is shared with other epistemic forms such as *maybe* or *perhaps* (Kearns 2007: 476). It may be said that the modal auxiliary verb deals with the description of similar issues of conceptualization and the speaker's attitude,



compared to those lexical verbs which denote (at least historically) particular mental actions (i.e. *think*, *imagine*, etc.). For instance, Maetzner (1874 vol.2: 130) categorizes *may*, *shall*, *will*, *let*, *must*, *can* and *dare* as “modal verbs” which add a certain tinge of indirectness or unreality to the propositional element of the clause. At the same time, he names *will*, *shall*, *can*, *may* and *must* as both “auxiliary and modal verb(s)” (1874 vol.2: 134), and regards them as the words which fortify the expression with more detailed additional information.

It is clear to see how forms such as *think* and *feel* represent some sort of subjective epistemic modality, since they have an overt association with the semantics of conceptualization. However, with abstract concepts like ‘necessity’ and ‘possibility’ which are associated with the semantics of modal auxiliary verbs, other factors may be relevant.<sup>30</sup> Walker (1805: 34) notes the abstractness of the modal sense as follows. He suggests that certain significations<sup>31</sup> are lodged in the modal auxiliary verb. These significations are often explained in the grammar book by listing what the modals ‘imply’ or ‘denote’. The use of such terms in these definitions suggests the authors are less confident in describing grammatical ‘meaning’, as opposed to lexical meaning. Likewise, Sutcliffe does not adopt the word ‘mean’ to explain what the modal auxiliary verb represents. He uses terms such as “the force and power” (Sutcliffe 1815: 55). Some researchers point out that this is a consequence of the process of grammaticalization which the modal auxiliary verbs had undergone (and continue to undergo) in the history of English (see, among others, Heine 1993; Denison 1993; Warner 1993). For example, the modal auxiliary verb *can* developed a series of meanings (some newer than others) as part of the grammaticalization process: mental ability, physical ability and root possibility (Bybee 1988, Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca 1992: 16, cited in Heine 1993: 90). This

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<sup>30</sup> As a learner of English as a second language, it was difficult to try to understand such concepts associated with the modals, by contrast with the clearer associations between epistemic modal and non-modal uses of verbs like *think*. This is presumably because the modals have grammaticalized further (and for longer) than is the case with forms like *I think* and *I believe*. As a result, to understand what the modal auxiliary verb indicates requires a series of conceptualisations, which may include the use of the modals as politeness markers. This puts English in sharp contrast with Japanese, since only in the latter, not the former, is politeness denoted exclusively by particular linguistic forms.

<sup>31</sup> As for the use of the word ‘signification’, recall that the word ‘sign’ was used to represent the modal auxiliary verb (see chapter 2, section 2.4.1.)



can be related to the polysemy associated with the modal auxiliary verb as it developed.

The fact that the subdividing of the definitions regarding the significations or implications of the modal auxiliary verb is not always successfully achieved by grammarians (Cramp 1838: 118) is also of interest in point of the vagueness sometimes associated with modal senses. Heine (1993: 70) suggests that the modal auxiliary verb itself has a variety of interpretations which ranges from more lexical and objective based to more modal and subjective based. Particular features of the specified terminology used to classify the (modal) auxiliary verb in earlier English grammars of the late modern period, such as 'helping verb' and 'sign', seems to reflect the situation which needs to treat the dynamically and flexibly conceptualised nature of a variety of potential senses with the general representative names (helping, sign) which are introduced in chapter 2, section 2.4.1, earlier in this thesis. Heine also points out the adoption of such vague terms to cover "the ambivalent nature of auxiliaries" (Heine 1993: 80). This seems particularly true of the modals. Several researchers have expressed that such a wide set of functions of the modal auxiliary verb in English is idiosyncratic compared to other European languages (Calbert 1973: 3, Green 1987: 256, Jenkins 1972: 9-12, Steel *et al.* 1981).

While politeness is one of the senses which emerged from the grammaticalization process, some grammarians of the Late Modern English period believed that the concept or distinction of politeness does not belong to the category of grammar (Marsh 1860: 351, Ramsay 1892: 391). Indeed, as we have seen, such pragmatic functions, such as politeness and indirectness, with which the modal auxiliary verbs are associated, are often neither clearly nor systematically explained in the grammar book; similarly, when such discussions do appear, the generally poor condition of description regarding politeness in such books may also be related to this. Nevertheless, it is possible to find certain linkages between grammar and politeness outlined in such texts, even though the connection is not strong, but rather subtle and indirect.

#### 4.4.2 The treatment of the historical development of the modals by Late Modern English grammarians.

In section 4.3, the existence of certain links between the modal senses was noted. These links suggest possible similarities between the significations of each of the modal auxiliary verbs, which are explored further in this section. As for the matter of semantic change associated with the modal auxiliary verbs, as has already been suggested, it is said that the range of meanings has extended from what were once lexical verbs to more grammaticalised meanings of possibility and necessity. Heine (1993: 53) calls the domain which is covered as a result of this historical grammaticalization process as “Verb to TAM (Tense, Aspect, Modality) chain”. When the semantics of the earlier forms of the modals is looked at, we can see that the precursors to the modern modal auxiliary verbs already shared certain common meanings. In this section, I examine how late Modern English grammarians treated the historical development of the modals.

Different inflectional forms are sometimes introduced as the origin of the modals; this varies from grammarian to grammarian. For example, in discussing the origin of *shall*, Daniel (1893: 104) says that it was “sculan”, Brown (1851: 347) points out that it was “sceal”, and Davis (1830: 92) indicates that it was “scealan”. However, they all agree that the meaning was ‘to owe’. Then, this ‘to owe’ was said to undergo a meaning change to be interpreted or represented as moral or ethical ‘necessity’, ‘obligation’ (Daniel 1893: 104) or ‘duty’ (Davis 1830: 92). With *will*, there is a description which suggests that the root can be traced to two verbs: Old English *willan* (= to will) and *wilnian* (= to desire), i.e. there may be influence from both (Daniel 1893: 105). Another argues that the meaning of Old English *willan* is “to resolve”, “to determine” (Davis 1830: 92). The same types of discussion relating to the correct etymological root can be found in the entries for the other modals.

There are examples available which seem to suggest the traces of the semantic – pragmatic change associated with the interpretation of the modal auxiliary verb. Consider the following series of citations which were extracted from Sweet (1903).

- (33) Under *conditional* we include all combinations of *would* and *should* with infinitives which are not clearly futures, even when their functions are not really conditional. But as they all agree in being moods rather than tenses, the absolute practical necessity of separating the mood- from the tense- functions of these periphrases makes it all the more desirable to avoid further subdivision.

(Sweet 1903: 111)

- (34) In such a phrase as *you should not make personal remarks* the preterite *should* is substituted for the present *shall* in order to soften down the imperativeness of *you shall not make..* Here there is no conditional meaning; the *should* keeps its original meaning, and is not even an auxiliary.

In the following examples we can also observe the original meaning of *shall*, but softened down so that the *shall* becomes a pure auxiliary: *why should you suspect him? | is there anyone with him? no; who should there be? | as I went down the street, who should I meet but our friend himself!* We can still see the influence of the original meaning in the first example ('what obliges you to suspect me?'), further softened down in the second, till in the last *should meet* becomes simply a periphrastic preterite.

(Sweet 1903: 114)

These mainly treat the issue of the interpretation or use of the modal auxiliary verb *shall*. (33) shows a functional transition: from a tense-based to a mood-based one. This move represents the evolution of the primary senses from futurity to periphrasis, as Sweet describes. The first of the examples in (34) indicates a similar change between past and polite (softening) uses because this can

be taken as the transition from tense to mood (modality). Moreover, it is also possible to notice that the original meaning of the modal auxiliary verb concerns obligation. The *should* in the example ‘*you should not make personal remarks*’ seems to be accompanied with the original meaning rather than the one as an auxiliary. However at the same time another sense, namely one which is ‘softened down’ can also be observed. This is, as it were, something like in-between the original and the auxiliary, or otherwise something which is an extension from the original lexical meaning to the auxiliary/grammatical one. The second example in (34) is explained as more auxiliary based, but still keeps its original sense to a certain extent. The modal sense ‘soften down’ spreads over the original and the auxiliary domains. As a result, Sweet suggests a diachronic sequence of the conceptualisation in terms of the modal auxiliary verb *shall*: 1. obligation → 2.

futurity → 3. periphrasis. (and subsequently to a politeness marker) When the nature of the concepts or senses raised here are considered and compared, this sequence seems to represent a move from the principal verb – based meaning to the time based sense, and eventually to the more modality – oriented concept. In other words, it can be interpreted as a sequence of more textual (more semantic) to more interpersonal (more pragmatic) idea. This view coincides with the ones which are claimed by some other researchers such as Traugott (e.g. 1989) and Kearns (2007) as (historical) grammaticalization. There are other authors from the Late Modern English period who share this kind of perspective, although it is not expressed in the same terms. Ramsay (1892) also points out the similar thing. For example, he describes the transition of the interpretation of the modal auxiliary verb *may* as following.

- (35) All idea of power has now departed from the word, and left it to express: 1st, permission; 2d, supposed possibility; 3d, a somewhat varying sense, always containing an undetermined element.

(Ramsay 1892: 373)

The permission sense was to be regarded as the primary meaning of the modal auxiliary verb, followed by possibility as its secondary meaning. We can see that the meanings which appear in order show a certain transition: from more concrete to more abstract senses.

- (36) “*May* I open the window a little? You *may*.”

This may be taken at present as the primary meaning of the word. The secondary may be found in such sentences as: “It *may* rain before night”; “He *may* recover yet”; “I *may* draw a prize in the lottery.”

(Ramsay 1892: 373-374)

Here we can notice that such meanings can of course coexist. What makes the interpretations of the application of the modal auxiliary verb different depends on contexts and situations. Indeed, there seem to exist certain common, coherent, related senses in each of the categorised meanings or conceptualisations of the historical sequence: power – deontic possibility (permission) – epistemic possibility. Consider the following citation.

- (37) In the third class of cases no doubt is felt but that something will occur; it is only its precise character or extent that is uncertain:

“The past is safe, whatever the future *may* be.”

“Notice! To all whom it *may* concern.”

Here it is not questioned that there is to be a future, or that some will be concerned; the details alone are indeterminate:

(Ramsay 1892: 374)

Although there is no ‘politeness’ directly marked in these descriptions, remember the connection between concepts and senses which has been pointed out several times throughout this thesis. The supposed senses such as ‘uncertain’ and ‘indeterminate’ can be linked to politeness. Again, it is possible to have a glance at a

historical grammaticalization in which forms becomes more subjective. As for the matter of connectivity, there is another thing which should be pointed out. Ramsay also explains that *may* shares certain commonalities with *can* (as power-related) and *shall* (as futurity-related) (1892: 373-374). In addition to the linkage of the concepts within the senses which can be derived from a single modal auxiliary verb, this linkage between the concepts of different modal auxiliary verbs seems to show a highly strong, yet flexible connection between the conceptualisation of the modal senses. At the same time, even though the modal auxiliary verbs share some commonalities, each modal can possess and produce certain distinct features of its own (which seems to be influenced by its original meaning or senses). Ramsay (1892) also implies this when he provides the information regarding the futurity association between *shall* and *may* in the following.

- (38) In such connections *shall* is sometimes used instead of *may*; but the fundamental meaning of *shall* is widely different, and there is an inconvenience in having two words of the same length with an uncertainty which of them ought to be employed.

(Ramsay 1892: 374)

Maetzner (1874) was one of the authors in the Late Modern English period who introduced the word 'modal' to identify the current modal auxiliary verb. He distinguished the terms: *may*, *shall*, *will*, *let*, *must*, *can* and *dare* by designating them as "the modal verbs" (Maetzner 1874 vol.2: 130). What this means is that such words were overtly grouped in a new subcategory by attaching the word 'modal', words which were previously simply categorized as signs together with other auxiliaries such as *be* and *do*. Since the original senses of the auxiliaries or signs had already been discussed in the grammar books which were published earlier, here we can see a diachronic progression of the recognition of the senses which were represented with the modal auxiliary verb.



Another point which it is important to be aware of with regard to the grammarians' treatment of semantic change, and which has been touched on elsewhere in this thesis, is the issue of polysemy, that is, that each modal auxiliary verbs may have a series of meanings. This is a reflection, or indeed consequence, of the process of grammaticalization through which each of the modal auxiliary verbs had acquired a range of further senses. As noted in the discussion above of the work of the Late Modern English grammarians, the root words were principal verbs. They had their own (clearer, more independent) lexical meanings which are not as vague and dependant as 'implications' or 'significations', which may be more associated with concepts in the domain of pragmatics. This more clearly defined lexical 'meaning' was said to influence the interpretation of the words even after they lost their main verb status. Daniel (1893: 106) suggests that the original senses of principal verb *may* still remained in the late nineteenth century in, for example, 'desire' which was said to be one of the current implications of the modal form. His description of the process of the development of *shall* from 'to owe' to 'necessity' and 'possibility' also seems to suggest the certain influence or remnants of the previous meaning. Similarly, Cramp (1838: 118-119) and Earle (1898: 59; see section 4.2 above) also explains that the decay of the root meaning due to the emergence of synonyms resulted in a vestige of the earlier meaning in the newer set of senses.

How are we to interpret the claims of these grammarians? It is clear that there exists the transition of meanings in the Verb to TAM chain associated with the historical grammaticalization process. There is a tendency in analyses of this diachronic procedure that gives the impression that previous meanings are superseded or taken over by more recent ones. However, as the authors above suggest, it is reasonable to think that there still remain influences of the previous meanings not completely devolving them to the newer ones. This relates to Hopper's work on layering and persistence (Hopper 1991). These two are proposed as parts of a set of principles of grammaticalization. The explanations are given below.



## (39) Layering

Within a functional domain, new layers are continually emerging. As this happens, the older layers are not necessarily discarded, but may remain to coexist with and interact with the newer layers.

(Hopper 1991: 22)

## (40) Persistence

The Principle of Persistence relates the meaning and function of a grammatical form to its history as a lexical morpheme. This relationship is often completely opaque by the stage of morphologization, but during intermediate stages it may be expected that a form will be polysemous, and that one or more of its meanings will reflect a dominant earlier meaning.

(Hopper 1991: 28)

The gist of each of them is that each historically emergent and adopted meaning, i.e. senses of a single modal auxiliary verb can stay alive as a potentially valid and influential factor in terms of acceptable use, and the accumulation of such single senses provides a polysemous network of senses which belong to the modal auxiliary verb.

In short, the meanings and implications, old and new actually coexist together even if generally it is regarded that the force of the old ones might be weaker than that of the new ones. This also corresponds to the point which Traugott (1986) makes regarding synchronic polysemy emerging from diachronic grammaticalization. In addition to the moves from concrete to more abstract meaning, and from marking root to epistemic modality, that have affected the development of the modals, there is also another development which is involved in the same process. It is the transition or extension to more pragmatic contexts that have come to be involved in the interpretation the modal auxiliary verb. (Bybee and Pagliuca 1985: 63, Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca 1994: 26) All in all, we can see that more and more factors,

including both intra and extra-linguistic connections, are required to understand the interpretation of the modal meanings and pragmatic use of the modal auxiliary verb.

#### **4.5 Summary of chapter 4**

This chapter has dealt with the meanings which are involved in changes in modality and the concept of politeness, based primarily on evidence from a corpus of Late Modern English grammar, usage and manner books. In section 4.1, I gave an outline of the issues which were to be treated in this chapter. In section 4.2, we could see the situation in which the connection between form and the senses of the modal auxiliary verb exists. In section 4.3, I considered the relationship between politeness and descriptions of the modals in grammar and usage books. In section 4.4, I showed it was possible to regard the connection of senses which spread over semantic – pragmatic, objective – subjective and concrete – abstract dimensions as a part of historical grammaticalization. These texts which I used in this thesis suggested that there were semantic (and in later texts, pragmatic) relations between those modal senses, which overlap. Furthermore, we can see that same modal senses (as far as the labels provided by the grammarians are concerned) are often shared as properties of more than two modal auxiliary verbs. This automatically suggests that the different modal auxiliary verbs which share the same senses are connected to each other in a semantic-syntactic network. Moreover, as for the matter of mutual connection between the modal auxiliary verbs, the premodals from which the modern modal auxiliary verbs originated also shared similar meanings. Many of these senses can be said to figure in the issue of politeness. This correlation is a key in charting the emergence of the modals as politeness markers. It is also interesting that such a developmental network is suggested as being implicated in the diachronic process known as grammaticalization. Modality reflects the states of the human mind, so subjectivity (see also section 4.4.1) is inherent in its expression. It is clear that our mind can distinguish subtle different senses. Such senses may emerge from lexical

words themselves, but come to be noticed somehow more indirectly, and may come to mark subjective or intersubjective relations in our social life. Most of the Late Modern English grammarians whose work I have consulted in this thesis regard such senses not as meanings, but as forces, implications or significations. In addition, it is also important to remember that the older meanings which were involved in the roots of the modal auxiliary verb potentially remain and influence newer meanings. The conceptualisation which surrounds the modal auxiliary verb is dynamic and flexible, not static. The situation should be modelled as something which reflects this, and which involves several related developments, including the emergent use of the modals as politeness markers. It has been shown that politeness senses of the modal auxiliary verb should be considered as part of a wider historical development, recorded in part by the late Modern English grammarians. The next chapter discusses a potential network structure of such senses of the modal auxiliary verb.

## **Chapter 5. Politeness and the modal auxiliary verb: a network model**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter aims to provide a more theoretical analysis of the data provided elsewhere in this thesis which I hope will be a good resource in this academic field. Section 5.2 reviews my prior discussion regarding the concept of politeness as it relates to analyses of the modal auxiliary verb provided by late Modern English grammarians. While it looks as though the descriptions in the available historical resources have a tendency to view the issue of politeness in either form or meaning, it seems that the factors which are involved in the two aspects should by and large be related to each other. We can see there is the potential to suggest that the relation can be described as a web-like network which is composed of links between the senses involved, and between these senses and the various linguistic forms. Section 5.3 introduces some existing models regarding the meanings associated with the modal auxiliary verb in English: four such models are observed and their characteristics are discussed. In section 5.4, I explore whether, and if so how, the proposed theories fit the data which are available from the textual resources of the Late Modern English period discussed elsewhere in this thesis. What is lacking and what should be added to make a better model is considered. In section 5.5, taking the revised ideas into consideration, I introduce a new model which provides a better account of the data.

### **5.2 Basing a linguistic model on grammar, manner and usage books**

#### **5.2.1 Review of previous discussions**

Let me summarise what can be said regarding the compositional arrangement of the relation between the modal auxiliary verb and its senses at this point. Here the

focus is very much on 'politeness' phenomena, as the discussions in this thesis indicate. To put it briefly,

#### Summary 1.

It is most likely that the sense of politeness is by and large composed of the fusion of several other related senses. In many cases, the componential senses may be considered a property of the modal auxiliary verb, or emerge as a result of the use of the modal auxiliary verb in particular contexts or usage events.

As for the matter of the merged nature of the sense of politeness, remember the earlier discussion of such issues in this thesis. In chapter 3, section 3.1.2.1, the discussion of the grammar, usage and manner books considered several concepts which reflect the trend of politeness in society during the Late Modern English period, focussing on issues such as 'gentle', 'modest', 'elegant', etc. As far as the descriptions in the text books are concerned, it seems that some of them come together to indicate politeness, even though it is possible to notice which componential concepts are stronger and weaker in each expression, depending on contexts and situations. This way of thinking, which indicates politeness as a mixture of several related senses, is also identical to more recent accounts of politeness among Japanese researchers. As we can see in chapter 3, section 3.2.3, both the American and Japanese politeness includes several specific indicators as kinds of politeness, like 'friendliness' and 'respect'. Therefore, while the details vary depending on times, societies and languages, the concept of 'politeness as a fusion' may be regarded as non specific. Accordingly, it might be said that there is no particular sense which is perceived to be directly and clearly 'polite'. The word 'politeness' seems to be a general term which represents a culmination of more specific senses.

Let us now look more closely at the aspect of the relationship between modal verb usage and politeness in English. Reviewing the relation between politeness and language which is discussed in this thesis so far, the following can be confirmed:

### Summary 2.

While politeness-related senses associated with the modal verbs, such as modesty, hypotheticality, etc. are indicated by earlier grammarians, polite senses are not only linked to a single word but also to the wider discourse context.

Recall the series of examples by Ramsay (1892: 390, 393, 394, 399) discussed in chapter 2, section 2.5.2. There, while some examples are introduced regarding how the modal auxiliary verb *shall* itself is used and interpreted, others suggest that the explanation is more about the word in particular usage events. A similar thing can be observed in the example which is provided by Sweet (1903: 113) in chapter 2, section 2.5.3.2, concerning the relation between hypotheticality, politeness and the modal auxiliary verbs *should* and *would*. Thomas (1995: 155) also suggests, reflecting the situation described above, that one is unlikely to find a single word in English whose core meaning is politeness, in other words, a single word which represents politeness clearly, directly and utterly; but one is more likely to find that each modal auxiliary verb has several senses which lead to polite use. The point is that it does not mean single words cannot be connected to politeness, but the closeness to the sense or concept of politeness is rather indirect, and established through use. In connection with this relational issue between word, clause and usage event, the following is also relevant:

### Summary 3.

There is a tendency that senses which are closer to the concept of politeness become more central as time goes by. This is connected to the historical process of grammaticalization (e.g. Sweetser 1990, Traugott 2004, Traugott and König 1991)

Descriptions of the classical core or root senses as potential routes to a politeness meaning were pointed out by several grammarians in the LModE period (e.g. White 1761, Fell 1784, Webster 1784, 1789). At that time the grammarians'



main concern was mostly a focus on smaller linguistic units in the rather normative grammar book. Their descriptions are concerned mainly with single words, not referring to further implications beyond the domain of the core senses. It is rare to see them take up the wider units like sentences and dialogues with detailed explanations which considered contexts and situations. Consequently, the available information about the senses of the modal auxiliary verbs in the books are restricted to those in a handful of texts in single terms such as 'ability', 'authority', 'intention', 'necessity', etc. These provide some indication to meanings associated with the prescribed forms. Even though some authors extended their views to wider units like clauses and sentences, it is very rare to see the word 'polite(ness)' itself directly in their descriptions. Fell (1784) for example, provides fairly detailed information regarding the use of the modal auxiliary verb as a separate topic at the end of his book; however, still, the extended senses which are discussed there are mostly concerned with 'hypothetical' and 'conditional' meanings. On the other hand, although particular concrete linguistic items and expressions are not normally indicated, a variety of representative markers of a kind of politeness, like 'elegant', 'decent', 'proper' and 'educated' were provided in manner and usage books throughout the Late Modern English period. Even though language-related subjects were often pointed out, they were at most rather general, collectively described as 'pronunciation' or 'tone'.

In the later nineteenth century particularly, some authors of the grammar book turned their attention to another wider unit, i.e. a phrase, and its use in particular contexts. Ramsay (1892) and Sweet (1903) examined the modals and their use in certain phrases and clauses. That is why senses like 'modest', 'hypothetical', and 'sweetening' came to be used more often in their descriptions of the modals. This part of the LModE period coincides with early appearances in the history of grammar writing of the adoption of the word or concept 'modal' to represent the nature of the implications of the current modal auxiliary verbs (Maetzner 1874) or with an indication of the thought – fact distinction. The thought – fact contrast is explained as a situation which represents the dichotomy between modified moods (especially the Subjunctive and the Potential) and the Indicative respectively (Sweet



1900) which would eventually lead to the concept 'modality' in their books. It is possible to notice that there emerges a certain development in the treatment of modals in grammar writing, from a more 'word in isolation' perspective to more 'word in context' one, along with the conceptualisation of the senses of the modal auxiliary verb. Moreover, this movement is coherent with the transition in the development of the historical grammaticalization process affecting the modals which has been introduced in this thesis (e.g. chapter 4, section 4.4).

In addition, the validity of this viewpoint concerning the diachronic development can be fortified by referring to the later situation. In the twentieth century, especially the latter half, with the development of the study of pragmatics, the senses of the modals came to be more connected and examined together with further wider units: sentences, contexts and dialogues. As noted above, although the word 'polite' was connected with modal auxiliary verbs in the grammar book in the LModE period (e.g. White 1761), their appearance was extremely rare. On the other hand, we can see that the modal auxiliary verb has been adopted by grammarians as a formal linguistic element in the explanation of the polite use or expression in grammar books for learners of English (Swan 1995) and for researchers in linguistics (e.g. Coates 1983, Leech 1987, Kashino 2002). More recently, a further wider view of 'discourse' has been suggested to connect modal verb usage to the sense of politeness (Usami 1998, 2002; Watts 2003).

### 5.2.2 Consequences

The issues discussed above confirm that it cannot be said that the modal auxiliary verb in English is a word which represents politeness exclusively and absolutely, like the honorific or the terms of respect in Japanese. The notion of politeness at least among English speakers is a mixture of related modal senses, which emerge from the use of modals in phrases, sentences, specific contexts and dialogues. Since it can be said that there is no particular sense which is perceived and called directly and clearly 'polite', politeness in English is quite flexible, having a variety of means of expression. On the other hand, those languages with certain

honorific systems have much narrower, restricted, and specified choices regarding the expression of politeness.

We must also remember that these modal senses are of course related to each other. For example, 'uncertain' and 'indeterminate' can be connected to politeness and resultantly both of them are interconnected via politeness (cf. chapter 2, section 2.5.3.2; chapter 4, section 4.4.2). It is also possible to remember that both 'power' and 'authoritativeness' (of, for example, *shall*), can be regarded as polite depending on situations and circumstances (Ramsay 1892: 390, 391, 394; see also chapter 4, section 4.4.2), since this may be connected to face work. Even at the most basic level, since modality can be arranged into a simple contrast between necessity and possibility (see chapter 2, section 2.3.2), it is clear that most of the modal senses can be linked to each other.

### 5.2.3 A network approach

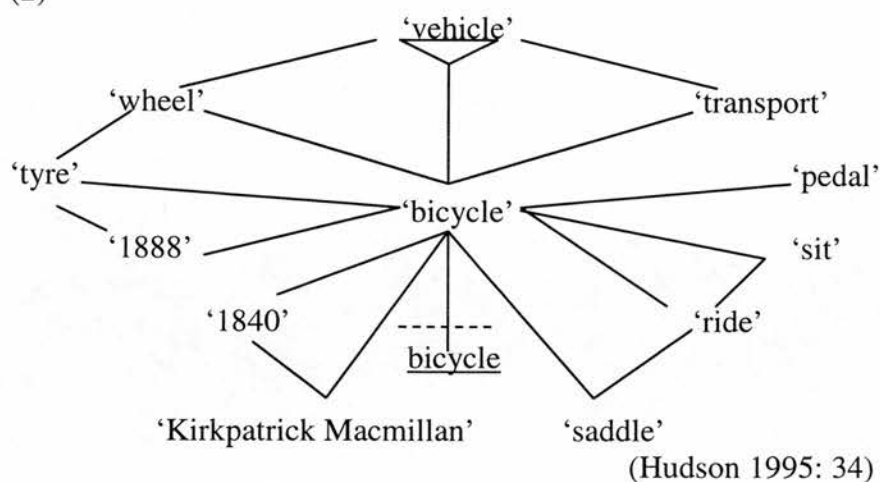
Hudson (1995, 1996, 2007) has developed and established his own network theory in his study of semantics, syntax and sociolinguistics. He introduces his view of the 'network' as follows.

- (1) In short, the facts about 'bicycle' link it to a number of other concepts in a little NETWORK. Each of these concepts is in turn linked not only to 'bicycle' but also to other concepts (including some that are in the 'bicycle' network), and so on, giving a gigantic network of interconnected concepts. According to many psychologists, this is a good description of our total knowledge – our knowledge of everything, including language as well as all the concepts that can be expressed in language.

(Hudson 1995: 33)

This mental network is represented as follows:

(2)



The connections are described by lines between elements or 'nodes', which provides a representation of some aspect of our mental activity. Although there emerges a certain commonality regarding aspects of the network-making across speakers, basically the action depends totally on individuals, i.e. it is a theory of individual knowledge. This is elaborated further as follows:

- (3) We start with the notion of language as a network. In WG [= Word Grammar: HO], the point of this claim is that language is nothing but a network-there are no rules, principles, or parameters to complement the network. Everything in language can be described formally in terms of nodes and their relations.

(Hudson 2007: 2)

Therefore, his theory of network is purely based on a theory of mind. On the other hand, while the connection-making between nodes, i.e. senses and words in my model may reflect some aspect of the nature of our mental make up, the source of the senses and words are mainly from the grammar book. In this regard, my model cannot be purely mind-oriented. It reflects an aspect of 'how people should speak', in other words, 'prescriptive data', not individual knowledge. Even though the data are taken from a combination of prescriptive and descriptive grammars, the basic idea of

a network conceptualisation to connect the elements is almost the same. Hudson (1996) suggests that network-making is driven by the influence of the mutual interaction between language, society and thought. The existence of this mutual influence can be noticed throughout the analysis provided in this thesis. After all, our conceptualisation of the world around us is influenced by our interaction with almost everything. No matter whether the source is internal, the outcome of our own raw mental thought, or external and prescribed, nor whether we are concerned with forms or concepts - they are all factors in the network. The point is that this research takes both the formal – conceptual factors into consideration and has indicated their interconnectedness.

#### **5.2.4 Evidence of the wide applicability of the network model**

In section 5.2.3, the discussion pointed out mutual relations and the resultant overlaps between senses associated with the modal auxiliary verbs. Now let us suppose a situation which circumscribes the relation between the senses which surround politeness. If this too appears to have a network structure, the previous suggestion – that our general conceptualisation, in which aspects of language, society and thought interact, can be modelled by a network – may be confirmed.

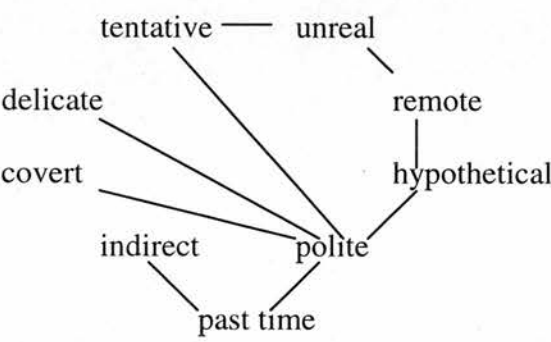
Coates (1983) discusses the issue of politeness by considering several related senses which are supposed to be characteristic of the modal auxiliary verb. She explains several connections among different senses in her description of modality.

**Table 5.1      Sequential connections among different senses**

tentative – unreal – remote – hypothetical (Coates 1983: 146-7)  
 polite – past time – indirect (Coates 1983: 210; see also Bybee 1995: 508)  
 covert – polite (Coates 1983: 212)  
 hypothetical – polite (Coates 1983: 216)  
 delicate – polite (Coates 1983: 216)  
 tentative – polite (Coates 1983: 217)

The senses and the connections described here seem to be linked to each other in succession, and can be schematized as follows:

**Figure 5.1     Links among related senses (schematization of the connections above)**

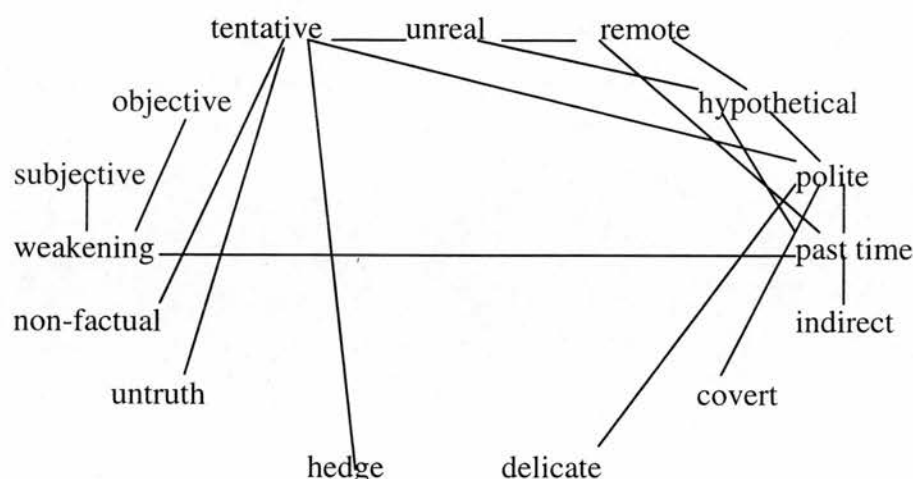


There are still some other sequences of modal senses pointed out by modern grammarians, such as:

**Table 5.2     Another sequence of connections among different senses**

- past form – remote – unreal (Joos 1964: 149)
- hypothetical – past, unreal (Palmer 2001: 207)
- hedge – tentative – counterfactual, truth (Leech 1987: 127)
- weakening – past forms (Nuyts 2001: 307)
- subjective – weakening (Huddleston 2002: 181-4)
- objective – weakening (Coates 1983: 184)

Since some senses indicated here are the same as previous ones, naturally, it is possible to add these connections to the former figure. As a result, the network structure gets bigger and more intricate, as illustrated below:

**Figure 5.2** Broadened links among related senses

Notice that many of the senses are related to each other, whether the links are close (direct) or distant (indirect, via other senses). This outline is merely a straightforward reflection of the limited descriptions. However, senses can be linked one after another, not necessarily restricted within these links. For example, 'weakening' is described as an effect of pragmatic conceptualisation (e.g. Huddleston 2002: 181-184, Coates 1983: 184). Although there is no description of the word 'polite' it is obvious that the pragmatic weakening can bring about a certain polite sense. Therefore, while almost all the senses can be related to each other directly and indirectly via the links here, there can be more potential links which are not currently indicated. Notice also that two contrastive senses, i.e. subjective and objective, are linked to the same sense (weakening). There is therefore high connectivity and applicability between modal senses, even ones which seem conflicting. A further example of this comes from Cutting (2002: 46) who explains that 'bold' and 'direct' are sometimes related to 'polite'. The former two senses are opposite to 'indirect', 'covert', etc.

Since the sources of these senses and concepts are provided mostly by the researchers in recent years, when politeness became more regarded as central to pragmatic study, the senses and concepts raised here look quite pragmatic-oriented. As a result, at first glance this compositional arrangement may give an impression which is different from the senses provided in the grammar and usage books in the

Late Modern English period, most of which provide descriptions which are more semantic-based. However, senses such as ‘past’, ‘hypothetical’, ‘weakening’, and ‘indirect’ overlap with those provided in the previous period, and a full analysis of the network structure as it applies to LModE data is provided in section 5.4 below.

There remains an issue as to how the relationship between the form of a modal auxiliary verb and its senses and concepts is to be understood and interpreted. The next section discusses this point.

### **5.3 Structuring the senses of the modals – monism vs. pluralism vs. eclecticism**

There have been various attempts to model the structure of the meanings and uses of modal auxiliary verbs. Kashino (2002: 5-9) suggests that there are three main schools of thought: ‘monism’ (e.g. Perkins 1983, Walton 1988), ‘pluralism’ (e.g. Hofmann 1976, Leech 1987, Palmer 1990), and ‘eclecticism’ (e.g. Sweetser 1990, Nakau, 1994, Papafragou 1998). Coates (1983: 9-10) adopts the terms ‘monosemy’, describing the analysis proposed by Joos (1964) and Ehrman (1966) and ‘polysemy’ describing the analysis proposed by Leech (1969, 1971) and Palmer (1974, 1979), which are almost equivalent to ‘monism’ and ‘pluralism’ respectively<sup>32</sup>. I introduce the theories briefly here. As can be seen in this section each of the theories has its merits and its demerits. I assume that it is important to have an attitude which tries to find a guide into tomorrow by taking lessons from the past; therefore, after confirming which of those merits should be utilized for a more advanced theory, I will introduce a new model.

#### **5.3.1 Monism / Monosemy**

This account recognises only a single core meaning for each modal. In other words, there is one-to-one relationship between form and meaning. Since this

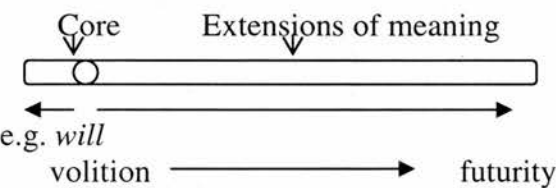
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<sup>32</sup> Coates (1983) provides graphic models of some of these theories.



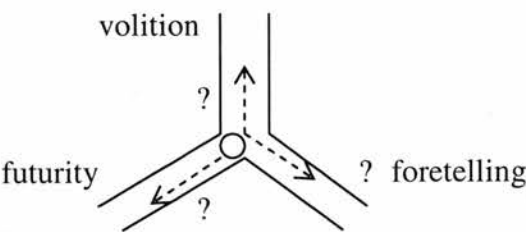
approach does not identify several distinct meanings which are accompanied with a single modal auxiliary verb, it does not recognise the varieties as different categorically. Therefore, in cases where a single modal auxiliary verb possesses more than one meaning, it is necessary to think that the single fundamental meaning is to be modified or transformed in a cline which connects the different senses. This situation may be represented as the following picture.

**Figure 5.3     Monism (a)**



A possible advantage with this approach is that it corresponds to the modelling of variation in meaning of associated with the concept of semantic prototype and extensions in Cognitive Grammar (cf. Taylor 2002). The differences between the variations are regarded as certain points in a smooth continuous transition, not in phased divisions where each meaning is more discretely established. However, there also appear problems with this approach. For example, when more than two meanings (senses) such as volition, futurity and foretelling can be recognisable at the same time in a given expression which includes the modal auxiliary verb (a situation which, as suggested above, is frequently described in the Late Modern English grammar book), it is not clear where the core is:

**Figure 5.4     Monism (b)**

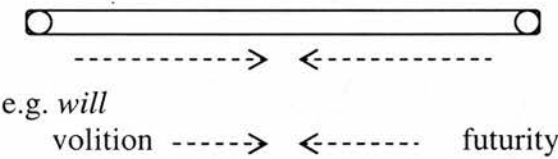


Even Ehrman (1966) admits the imperfectness of this approach by realising the existence of multiple meanings with a single modal auxiliary verb. Basically, this account takes only semantic senses into consideration. There is no pragmatic meaning to be derived from this composition. Therefore, this monist model cannot deal with the situation in which several senses (both semantic and pragmatic) are combined. The narrow-focused approach on semantic senses does not seem to be efficient enough to fully understand the range of meanings which characterise uses of the modal auxiliary verbs.

### 5.3.2 Pluralism / Polysemy

This approach tries to recognise more than two meanings as discretely different categories in the meaning of a single modal auxiliary verb. Consequently, it seems to be said that there can be as many ‘cores’ as there are different meanings. The simplest situation with this approach is described below adopting the example of *will*.

**Figure 5.5 Pluralism**



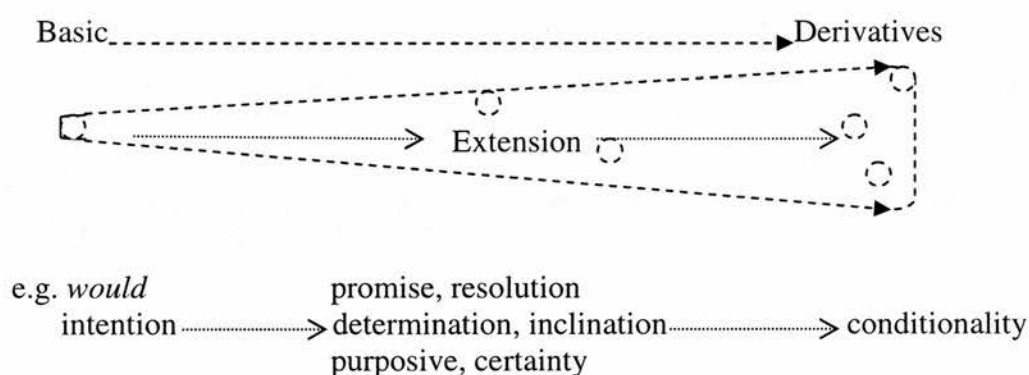
In this situation, single meanings of each modal auxiliary verb are regarded as equal (i.e. it is not the case that one meaning is the prototype, and the others extensions.). If this is so, this approach cannot explain the existence of the differences regarding the degree or strength of impression which each meaning contributes to the overall sense of the form. Meanings identified as inherent in the same expression should not be completely separated from each other. Furthermore, even if the idea of cline is adopted, the view taken by this approach is still restricted within the domain of semantic meanings only: pragmatic meanings are beyond its

vision. Palmer (1990: 15) admits that this account cannot cope properly with the complex situation of the mixture of the meanings involved.

### 5.3.3 Electicism

The eclecticism account regards that the meanings of a modal are basically composed of two parts: a basic sense and extensions or derivatives from that basic sense. On the one hand there is a single core, as in the monist account, but the range of the meanings and senses is not restricted within the semantic domain. However, although this approach recognises several different meanings and senses, there is always a single meaning (core), which can be transformed to other meanings depending on the larger linguistic and discourse context. This is different from the monism / monosemy account because it admits pragmatic meaning. The illustration of the situation of this account can be described like the following.

**Figure 5.6 Electicism**

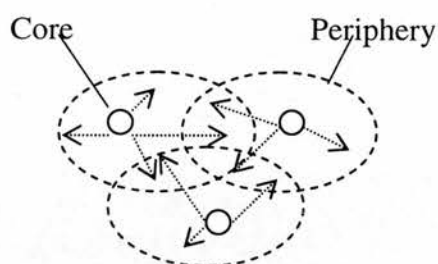
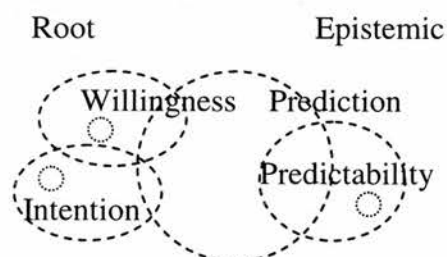


For example, in the case of *would*, if 'intention' is regarded as its basic sense, this core permits a range of other derived senses and concepts such as promise, certainty and conditionality. With this model, pragmatic senses are adopted. In the illustration above, we can see a certain latitude within the interpretation of the meaning. This reflects the various actual uses in which variation in meaning correlates with situation and context. Nevertheless, even this model may be further refined to accurately model the complexity of the sense of the modal auxiliary verbs.

Whatever the derivative meanings are, this account views one meaning as central. As already pointed out in previous sections, it is reasonable to argue that there are several senses involved simultaneously in different proportions in any one instance of use of a modal auxiliary verb. Consequently, this model lacks the ability to represent the simultaneous multiplicity of senses involved with the modal auxiliary verb, let alone the matter of degree. Moreover, although more pragmatic-like senses are introduced in this model, those that are more interpersonal, such as politeness, are hardly referred to at all.

### **5.3.4 Fuzziness and mutual overlaps**

Coates (1983) reflects on the issues of the simultaneous multiplicity of senses and the matter of degree. She developed the previous models into a broader interactional account. In addition to the previously described gradual transition (from core to periphery), she introduced an idea of fuzziness. When Coates models the mechanism of the meaning of the modal auxiliary verb, she keeps the complexity and ambiguity between senses which are brought about by speakers' use of the modal verbs. One aspect of Coates' model can be described as mutual overlap. The idea is that the meaning of the modal auxiliary verb in any particular usage event can be located at the intersection of several senses. This is quite different from the previous view of the component senses as single independent and discrete. As a result, the fact that some senses are interpreted at the same time in the same expression, even if the distinction is subtle and ambiguous, can be explained. Second, she introduced the idea of fuzziness, a concept inherited from "fuzzy set theory" by Zadeh (1965, 1970, 1971, 1972, cited in Coates 1983: 11-12). What can be understood by the term 'fuzzy' or 'fuzziness' is the existence of a gradual transition or overlap with each of the involved senses. Coates adopts the following figures to represent the situation.

**Figure 5.7(a) Overlap, Interference****Figure 5.7(b) Fuzzy Set Diagram of *Will***

(based on Coates 1983: 170)

Figure 5.7(a) is a general composition to represent her basic idea. The dotted line represents the peripheral boundary of the range of senses of a single modal auxiliary verb. On the one hand, there are parts where only single senses exist. On the other, there are also parts where a number of senses overlap. Coates (1983: 12-13) adopts the idea of ‘fuzzy’ from Zadeh’s (1972: 4) description about “fuzzy set”: “a class in which the transition from membership to non-membership is gradual rather than abrupt”. For instance, in figure 5.7(a) above, the degree of the strength of the impression of each meaning is the strongest in the core, and the degree gradually weakens as you move from the core to the periphery. The fuzzy condition is also applied to the area where senses overlap. Accordingly, this model is intended to solve some of the problems associated with the previous models.

Figure 5.7(b) shows an example which reflects the condition of *will*. The meaning of this modal auxiliary verb has developed from a lexical one, via an expression of root modality to epistemic senses, and marking of futurity. Meanings which belong clearly to root or epistemic are said to have their own cores. Here,

Coates suggests that ‘willingness’ and ‘intention’ belong to root modality and ‘predictability’ belongs to epistemic modality. On the other hand, in Coates’ analysis of *will* here, another sense ‘prediction’ does not have a core. This is because ‘prediction’ locates in-between the root and epistemic senses; it emerged as an after-effect, and is more associated with pragmatic inferencing. Such a semantic-pragmatic distinction (the first with a core, the second without) is coherent with the idea of the “layering”, which was proposed by Hopper (1991), and discussed in chapter 4 above.

However, there is still room to reconsider some issues. For example, in figure 5.7(b), we can see that intention / willingness and predictability do not overlap each other at all. In other words, the root and epistemic aspects are not connected. Is this true, even in a straightforward example like:

*I will have an ice-cream?*

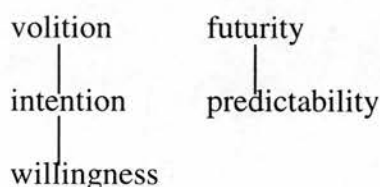
Ramsay (1892: 376) argued that the modal auxiliary verb *will* showed a gradual transition from volition to futurity. This of course does not mean that the original volition is no longer valid. The volitional sense can still be noticed and used, but the frequency of use with this particular sense has decreased. Since there is no clear border which divides the two senses, this should also mean that both of them can sometimes co-exist with each other, in the same single expression, at least in cases of ambiguity: such a connection between the two would facilitate the meaning change over time. (Basically volition is a concept which implies futurity, so volitional uses invite a pragmatic inference of futurity, as in the example above *I will have an ice-cream.*) Volition, intention and willingness seem to be related; futurity and predictability also share a certain commonality. In sum, first volition and futurity are connected:

**Figure 5.8     Connection of the basic senses of *will***

volition\_\_\_\_\_futurity

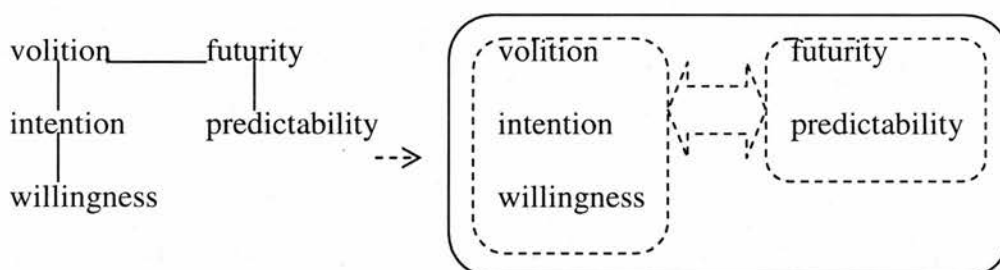
Then the connections of two groups: volition, intention and willingness, and futurity and predictability can be established.

**Figure 5.9 Sequential connections of volition and futurity**



Once all the relations are put together, the following emerge:

**Figure 5.10 Synthetic connection of the senses of *will***



As can be seen, all the involved senses can be connected. This is not recognised in the model which Coates introduced. Her model may be good in reflecting the static and synchronic use of the English modal auxiliary verb. But it requires some adaptation to cover some diachronic aspects, to bring out how her use of synchronic variation may be implicated in historical changes. The useful concept of a 'fuzzy set' could be utilised more broadly.

It seems, then, that there is still room to advance this model. The critical point concerns the characteristics of a certain network system of form and meaning. The discussion which tries to establish a revised network-based model will be described in section 5.5; in the next section, I show how Coates' discussion relates to Late Modern English data



## 5.4 Application of previous accounts to the LModE data

The previous section is composed mainly of the introduction of some theories which have been raised to date in terms of the structure of the meaning of the modal auxiliary verb. As a result, there is little information provided which connects more to the descriptions of the modal auxiliary verb in the Late Modern English period. This section takes up some related information from the descriptions in the grammar book of the Late Modern English period, and applies the theories to clarify how they cope with the historical data. Only a partial set of data is analysed for purposes of theory comparison. Example (4) shows Webster's explanations regarding what can be expressed with *may*:

- (4) *May* expresses possibility or liberty, and properly belongs to the present tense of the potential mode. It is always absolute or unconditional.

(Webster 1784: 30, emphasis added)

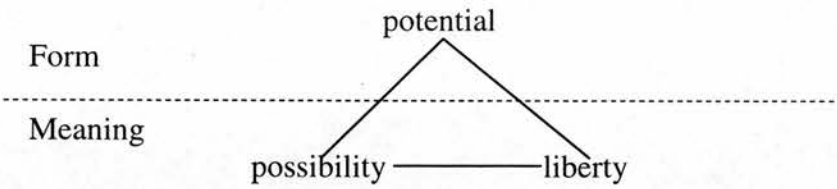
From the description of *may*, there are two basic senses: possibility and liberty. Whether they overlap or are discrete is debatable, but it should be reasonable to argue that they more or less influence each other: not only do they both derive ultimately from the original meaning of *may*, but liberty by and large leads to possibility. Therefore, first, there are two senses related.

**Figure 5.11 Connection of the basic senses of *may***

possibility ——— liberty

Next comes potentiality. This is an inflectional category, not a meaning, so we might structure one part of the *may* network as follows:

**Figure 5.12** Connection beyond the distinction of form and meaning



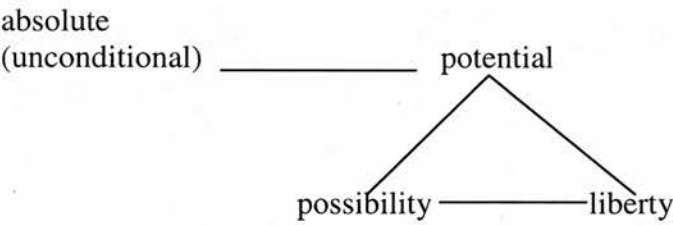
There are other senses proposed as ‘absolute’ and ‘unconditional’, connected to the other form node as in the following figure:

**Figure 5.13** Connection of forms described in an example (5) of *may* (a)



Last, the forms ‘potential’, ‘absolute’ and ‘unconditional’ are connected to each other:

**Figure 5.14** Connection of senses described in an example (5) of *may* (b)



There is an important thing which needs to be recognised. This figure indicates only one aspect of potential relations which are available in any interpretation of the modal auxiliary verb. As more than one single sense can coexist, the monism model does not seem to explain the situation well. Since the broad concepts such as ‘potential’, ‘absolute’ and ‘unconditional’ are beyond the domain of the pluralism view, the account is also rejected. As for the compatibility with the

eclecticism account, such a view does not match the reality in which several senses coexist together. Coates' model, however, seems to deal well with each sense of the modal auxiliary verb in isolation, although the arrangement of overlapped senses still needs to be re-considered. As far as Coates' model is concerned, there are cases in which certain combinations of senses are not possible (as suggested in the last part of the previous section). But consider now a further example which explains the meaning of *may* in Late Modern English:

- (5) *May* is elegantly used in asking a question, to soften the boldness of an inquiry;  
 'How old *may* you be?'

(Angus 1812: 70, emphasis added)

This description of *may* gives us further senses associated with the use of that modal in the Late Modern period: 'elegant' and 'soften'. This focus on the pragmatic function of *may* does not deny the existence of other potential senses of the modal auxiliary verb, such as those described by Webster, even if Angus (1812) does not highlight them. The principle of layering suggests that previous senses tend to remain (at least in part) within some of the accumulated derived senses associated with the potential mode. It should be understood that in the example above, when this expression is uttered in a certain situation, the modal auxiliary verb works to produce the senses which are recognised as 'soften' and 'elegant'. This situation might be analysed as follows. There is the first impression, recognisable as a use of *may* to mark an elegant or softened expression:

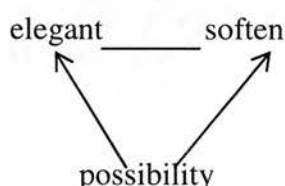
**Figure 5.15 Connection of senses described in an example (5) of *may***

elegant \_\_\_\_\_ soften

But at the same time, there are senses which support such pragmatic uses. These supporting senses, such as 'possibility' in this case with *may*, should be regarded as quite essential to produce the desired effect. The 'possibility' use of *may*

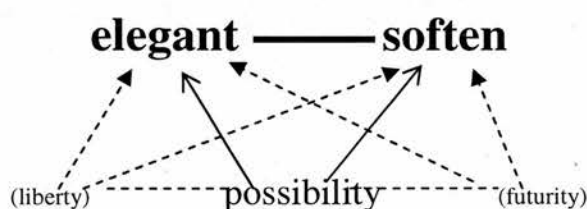
can index an ‘elegant’ or ‘softened’ interpretation. In other words, the use of such a modal invites a pragmatic inference on the part of the hearer. This means, the pragmatic aspect may be inferred in a particular usage event. As a result, the picture which reflects this condition is something like the following.

**Figure 5.16** A possible connection of senses of *may* (a)



We can revise this in order to recognise the relative importance of the senses, as in the following figure. The size and the thickness of the font is intended to show that the relative weight of each of the senses associated with the use of *may* on this occasion. Likewise, the thickness of the line means that the relation is more prominent. The bracketed senses and the dotted lines and arrows represent some examples of potential connections. Although there are more available senses associated with *may*, such minor ones are omitted from this figure.

**Figure 5.17** A possible connection of senses of *may* (b)



Here in this particular situation, ‘elegant’ and ‘soften’ are supposed to represent the strongest pragmatic force of the expression as a whole, even though source of the effect originates in the modal auxiliary verb. The lines from ‘possibility’ to ‘elegant’ and ‘soften’ represent how the involved senses relate to each other. ‘Possibility’ as a modal sense is regarded as quite fundamental. This means, it is more semantically (rather than pragmatically) oriented (cf. chapter 2, section

2.3.2). 'Elegant' and 'soften' are the senses which are more pragmatically oriented but are supported by more semantic based senses.

We can now extend this discussion to another modal auxiliary verb *might*, historically the preterit form of *may*. First, let's look at how the modal auxiliary verb was defined by Webster and Sweet:

- (6) *Might* expresses the same possibility or liberty under a condition, which defeats the effect;  
In the present tense it is always conditional; in the past tense, it is either absolute or conditional:  
(Webster 1784: 30, emphasis added)
- (7) The combination *might* + infinitive in independent sentences is used to soften a request by making it more indirect, as in *might I ask...? / might I be allowed to ask...?* = 'may I ask'  
(Sweet 1903: 116, emphasis added)

In this example, Sweet explains the interrogative use of *might*. The senses raised here are 'soften' and 'indirect'. The combination is not pointed out in the previous example of *may*. Although only the two senses are indicated, as I suggested in the discussion with the example of Angus (1812: 70), it should be reasonable to think that we could link this to other, fundamental senses such as possibility and liberty. Also, it is quite likely to be the case that there are other potential senses which can be related to the senses 'soften' and 'indirect'. In such uses of the modal auxiliary verb, we can clearly recognise how frequently, flexibly and dynamically this kind of connection-making is, i.e. the appearance of more nodes and more links between nodes is reiterated, in the modal network.

So far the examples introduced in this section have focused on *may* and *might*. But the outcomes which are deduced from the discussions are applicable to the other modal auxiliary verbs in the Late Modern period. As an example, I now introduce several descriptions regarding the use of another modal auxiliary verb *shall*. The

examples (8) – (12) below show several descriptions which are cited from different grammar books in the Late Modern English period.

- (8) *Shall* in the first persons... simply express the foretelling:  
in the second and third persons, ... it promises, threatens,  
commands...

(Greenwood 1711: 129, emphasis added)

- (9) *Shall* is an imperious word, and much stronger than *must*

(Ramsay 1892: 383, emphasis added)

- (10) *Shall* is a word of authority and command."

*Shall* is properly used only by the power that can enforce it."  
...*shall* is a harsh word, and at best requires a deal of  
sweetening.

So, instead of saying "You *shall*", persons in authority are  
now much in the habit of saying "You *will please*"...

(extracted from Ramsay 1892: 390, emphasis added)

- (11) "I *shall*" and generally to contain a tinge of volition.

...there is a general impression that "I *shall*" is explicit and  
self-asserting – hence more modest – than "I *will*". The  
distinction is not of grammar but of politeness.

(extracted from Ramsay 1892: 391, emphasis added)

- (12) *Shall* from its derivation, always implies necessity, duty, etc.  
and as being acted upon by some other person or thing:

(Davis 1830: 93, emphasis added)

What we can see from these examples is that the modal auxiliary verb *shall* is  
diversely interpreted by grammarians in the late Modern period. Of these senses,

there are some which seem to be more associated with root modality: fortelling, promising, threatening, commanding, volitional, necessity and duty (cf. the semantic based senses which are pointed out as the meaning of *shall* in chapter 2, section 2.3.2.1), and the others which seem to be more context-based, such as a marker of 'politeness' or 'modesty'. Therefore, a revised model of the network relation between modal senses, to be proposed in the next section seeks to bring out the connection between such semantic and pragmatic uses of the modals.

## 5.5 A new model – establishing a modal network

There have so far emerged some general points which suggest the characteristics of the conceptualisation of the senses of the modal auxiliary verb from the discussions in this thesis. What can be said regarding the mechanism of the interpretation of the modal senses is that the senses which we can recognise as the meaning of the modal auxiliary verb in any given usage event are composed of several 'sub' meanings. As the descriptions of the examples in the section 5.4 suggest, more than single senses can co-exist simultaneously in a single expression which involves a modal auxiliary verb. The model provided by Coates (1983) which was invented after revising previous theories shows the importance of such multiple meanings by invoking a categorisation of overlapped senses. In adopting a newly proposed network model in this thesis, the nature of the links between senses is to be considered.

In this model, I divide pragmatic meanings into two subgroups. One is 'textual-pragmatic', and the other is 'social-interactional'. By 'textual-pragmatic', I mean senses which are associated with the larger linguistic context in which the modal verb appears. For instance, senses such as 'conditional' and 'remote' which are often pointed out in descriptions of the modal auxiliary verb, especially the preterit form, should not be seen as part of a semantic core. Rather, they should be the senses derivable from a formal construction like the commonly recognised conditional clause, in which verbs historically were marked with the potential /



subjunctive mood. By 'social-pragmatic' I mean senses whose recognition depends on knowledge of the interpersonal, communicative context, beyond the domain of mere lexical and literal sources. Senses such as 'polite' and 'modest' are in this category. On the other hand, I use 'semantic' here as the meanings which are lodged in the single modal forms themselves as their fundamental core meanings. In sum, three provisional 'meaning' categories: semantic, text-pragmatic, and social-interactional are used to develop a new model. I will apply these categories to discuss the situation of the connections, and discuss each in detail below.

### 5.5.1 Provisional categories of network

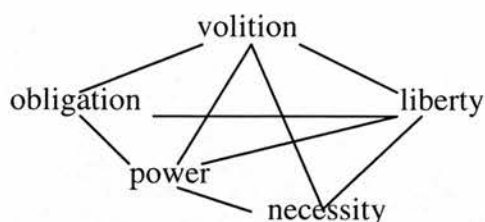
#### ① Semantic network

This category is supposed to include the following meanings of the modals as provided in descriptions in the grammar books of the Late Modern English period.

#### Category 1: semantic

Examples: volition (*will*), obligation (*shall*), liberty (*may*), power (*can*) and necessity (*must*)

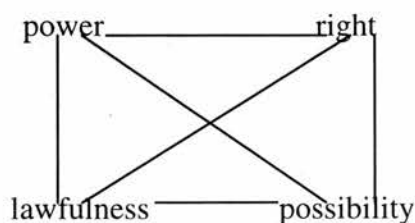
As for the issue of semantic modal sense, it is said that the senses are largely grouped into two senses: possibility and necessity (see chapter 2, section 2.3.2). Although this may give an impression that the two basics are separated, both concepts in fact have a common feature, since they are both related to the illocutionary force of an utterance. The general point, however, is that most of the semantic senses can be connected to each other, as follows:

**Figure 5.18 A semantic network**

We can illustrate this semantic network in action based on data from Greenwood (1711). The example below is Greenwood's description about the interpretation in terms of *may* and *might*.

- (13) *May, Might* denote or intimate the power of doing a thing.  
*May, Might* are spoken of the right, lawfulness or at least, the  
possibility of the thing.  
 (extracted from Greenwood 1711: 130-131, emphasis added)

The relation between 'power', 'right', 'lawfulness' and 'possibility' is as follows. 'Right' can represent authority, and authority leads to 'power'. 'Lawfulness' is related to exercising the 'power' of legal code. 'Power' may only be exercised if something is 'possible'. We can diagrammatise this as follows:

**Figure 5.19 Semantic network based on example (13)**

This has therefore illustrated that there exist networks between the senses in the domain of semantic concepts.

## ② Textual-pragmatic network

Senses such as 'unreal' and 'hypothetical' seem to be the examples of members of the textual-pragmatic category.

Category 2: textual-pragmatic

Examples: conditional, hypothetical, unreal

At this level, the connection to a particular single modal auxiliary verb is not so strong compared to the one which can be linked in the semantic network. Therefore, these senses are said to accompany some or even most of the modal auxiliary verbs. For instance, Webster (1784: 27 - 30) indicates potentiality as the sense which is available with *can*, *may* and *must*, while 'conditionality' is attached to the preterit form of every single modal auxiliary verb. This is because the textual pragmatic senses may be said to relate rather to a clause or a sentence (and even utterance) as a block or unit. In other words, the larger unit (which includes the modal auxiliary verb as its head) is an important factor to bear in mind with this kind of sense. Because of this, this category might be associated with mood, whose primary distinction concerns the derivations of the verb, but also syntactic factors sometimes (since the inflection is also arguably the head of the clause). The 'conditional' clause in the subjunctive mood can be provided as an example. Consequently, the senses in this category can be related to be larger structures and forms to a certain extent. The senses involved in this category are influenced by extra factors under this broad view, senses which derive from the sources beyond the single modal auxiliary verb, but still interpretable from the larger context. That is why I call this category textual-pragmatic network.

As the word 'network' suggests, senses in the same category are supposed to be connected, being of the same kind. However, when the senses listed above as examples are considered, it might give an impression that the senses are divided into two groups. One includes potential, conditional and hypothetical, and the other has

absolute and unconditional. The former may seem to be associated with 'thought' and the latter, 'fact', if the conceptualisation of the thought – fact distinctions of mood<sup>33</sup> (Sweet 1900) and of modality<sup>34</sup> (Palmer 2001) is adhered to. But since such forms are located at one or other end of the factual – counterfactual pole, all the senses described above can be classified under this distinction. In addition, when the senses themselves, in other words, the contents or natures are considered, those which sound different can be connected as contrastive. For example, 'real' and 'hypothetical' are diametrically opposed. But this does not necessarily mean that they are incompatible in terms of their appearing as part of a network. Indeed, 'conditional' and 'absolute' are contrastively applied in the explanations of forms which related to the modal auxiliary verb (e.g. Webster 1784):

- (14) *Can* expresses power solely; it belongs to the present tense of the potential mode, and is always absolute or unconditional.  
(Webster 1784: 28, emphasis added)

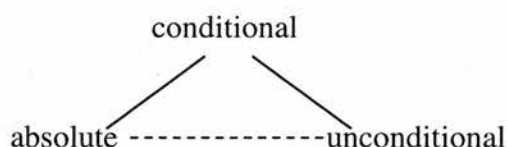
So, here senses such as 'real' and 'hypothetical' are involved; consider example (6), repeated below:

- (6)' *Might* expresses the same possibility or liberty under a condition, which defeats the effect;  
In the present tense it is always conditional; in the past tense, it is either absolute or conditional:  
(Webster 1784: 30, emphasis added)

<sup>33</sup> 'A fact mood' (as indicative), 'a thought mood' (as subjunctive) (Sweet 1900: 107).

<sup>34</sup> From Palmer's explanations, it is possible to understand that modalized represents thought and non-modalized represents fact (Palmer 2001).

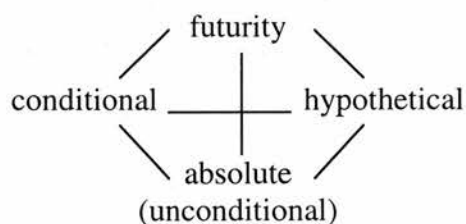
**Figure 5.20** Textual-pragmatic network based on example (14) and (6)'



It may not be clear how these senses form a textual-pragmatic category. However, as already introduced, other senses such as 'hypothetical' and 'unreal' should be included as being of the same kind, and 'futurity' may be another sense which can be categorised in this group (especially since things 'conditional' or 'hypothetical' are related to future time).

Although 'potential' and 'absolute' / 'unconditional' sound different and opposite to each other, they are related. At least, in the interpretation of the modal sense, they can co-exist, linked to each other. Even though Webster does not mention the connection between 'absolute' and 'unconditional', it is obvious and reasonable to think that they are the same kind and there is certain potential link which connect between them (the dotted line). This can also be said to other patterns like 'conditional' – 'unconditional', 'absolute' – 'hypothetical' and the like. As a result, for example, there emerges the following network arrangement of linked relations between the senses raised in this group.

**Figure 5.21** Another textual-pragmatic network



Now we can see that there is a certain network which connects senses in the textual-pragmatic domain.

### ③ Social-interactional network

Senses which are the components of this network group are, for example, the following.

Category 3: social-interactional

Examples: polite, modest, gentle, elegant, harsh

As was already suggested, these kinds of senses do not appear without some notion of other people, or the social world in which we use language. 'Modest' cannot be felt without the recognition of 'blunt'. 'Elegant' cannot be noticed without the notion of 'vulgar'; and none of these senses are available without the existence of other people with whom we interact. When we consider descriptions of modality in late Modern English grammar and usage books, unfortunately, there are not so many examples in which several senses of this category are described together in the same explanations. Therefore, it is difficult to show the connected situation of the senses on a large scale, directly and only from the descriptions in the grammar book. However, still, there are some which provide us with a few senses grouped together. For example, consider the following, given above as (5).

- (5) ' *May* is elegantly used in asking a question, to soften the boldness of an inquiry;  
'How old *may* you be?'

(Angus 1812: 70, emphasis added)

Here, Angus (1812: 70) links 'elegantly' to 'soften'. So it is possible to regard that they work together to produce a certain polite sense. In example (10)' and (11)':

- (10) ' ...*shall* is a harsh word, and at best requires a deal of sweetening.

So, instead of saying “You *shall*”, persons in authority are now much in the habit of saying “You *will please*”...’

(extracted from Ramsay 1892: 390, emphasis added)

(11) “I *shall*” and generally to contain a tinge of volition.

...there is a general impression that ‘I *shall*’ is explicit and self-asserting – hence more modest – than “‘I *will*”. The distinction is not of grammar but of politeness.’

(extracted from Ramsay 1892: 391, emphasis added)

Ramsay (1892: 390, 391) explains that *shall* sometimes denotes ‘harsh’ and sometimes ‘modest’ and ‘polite’ utterances. There is also another example, from Smith (1816):

(15) A slight assertion, with modest diffidence, is sometimes made by the help of *should*;

“I *should* think”, for “I am rather inclined to think.”

In the following examples it is elegantly redundant:

“I *should* advise you to proceed”; “I *should* think it would succeed”;

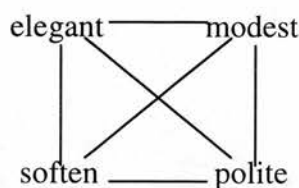
“he, it *should* seem, thinks otherwise.”

(Smith 1816: 63, emphasis added)

Although it may be debatable regarding whether ‘diffidence’ is categorised as social-interactional (though I think it should be), at least, ‘modest’ and ‘elegant’ are clearly connected. Even though only three examples are introduced above, it is already possible to draw the following picture of the same sequential network, directly and only reflecting the relations mentioned there.

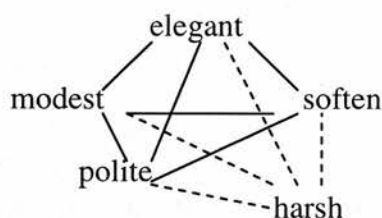


**Figure 5.22 A social-interactional network based on example (15) (cf. (5)', (11)')**



Then, although the nature may be slightly different, 'harsh' (cf. (10)') can be added to this network.

**Figure 5.23 Another social-interactional network**



Here the dotted lines mean the connection is of a different kind or nature compared to the solid ones. Yet again, we see a network connection between these social-interactional factors.

### 5.5.2 Fusion as a total network of modal senses

As a result of the group by group observation in the section above, we can now see the similarity between the three categorical networks, namely semantic, textual-pragmatic and social-interactional. In this circumstance, as would be predicted by a grammaticalization account, we are also to realise that there exist links which connect the different categories. Some might already have noticed that grammarians take up the words from different groups in the same definitions or descriptions of particular expressions involving the modal auxiliary verb, relating each to the other. The examples already introduced confirming this are those such as the following. Here category 1 is associated with the semantic network, category 2

with the textual-pragmatic network; and category 3 with the social-interactional network, as already described.

**Table 5.3      Combinations of network categories**

In example (4) and (6),  
 ‘possibility’, ‘liberty’ (category 1) and ‘potential’, ‘absolute’, ‘unconditional’  
 and ‘conditional’ (category 2);  
 in example (11),  
 ‘volition’ (category 1) and ‘modesty’, ‘politeness’ (category 3);  
 in example (7),  
 ‘indirect’ (category 2) and ‘soften’ (category 3).

In addition, there is another example introduced by Webster (1789: 238) in terms of the senses which can be interpreted with *should*.

- (16) ... in the second and third persons, express duty, and the idea of the author was, to express an event, under a condition, or a modest declaration;  
 “he *should* have used *would*”

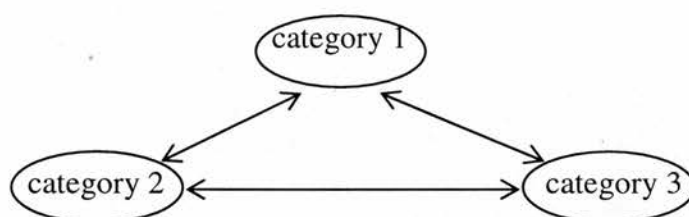
(Webster 1789: 238, emphasis added)

In this example, ‘duty’, ‘declaration’ and ‘event’ can belong to category 1, ‘condition’ belongs to category 2 and ‘modest’ is category 3. In other words, all the three categories are involved at the same time. It is clear that the connections between senses are very flexibly linked without particular actual borders. Sweet (1903) also makes explicit the trans-categorical nature of an utterance in his association of conditional with hypothetical, softening and futurity. As a result, it can be taken that he suggests that there exist connections between the semantic factors associated with a modal and its use as a potential marker of politeness or face work. He also observes that there is a correlation between indirectness and the

'softening' of the force of the request when a speaker uses a particular form (the modal *might*) in a particular construction (the interrogative) (Sweet 1903: 116) Although this kind of linking depends on several conditions of the structure and context of the expression, it is certain that the modal verb is central in producing the sense of politeness.

Although the examples introduced are limited and on a small scale, it is possible to confirm the mutual connections between the three groups. This leads us to make the following analysis.

**Figure 5.24 Mutual linking**



So far this section has tried to describe multiple meanings with regard to the senses which can be recognised with the modal auxiliary verb. However, there are still issues left behind which should be taken into account to introduce an advanced network model. For instance, with regard to the semantic variation associated with the modal auxiliary verb, the examples so far have shown that several senses are shared across a set of modals; however, sometimes, some senses can emerge only under certain contexts and situations at the moment of the interpretation. Look at the examples below from Fell (1784), indicating one of the explanations of the possible uses of *would*:

- (17) Applied in a peculiar sense to past actions that were attended with unusual diligence, anxiety, or delight:

She *would* ask help, and *would* tell her name and misfortunes.

(extracted from Fell 1784: 170)

This shows that some uses of *would* are highly specialised or used in a highly specialised context (for instance, ‘attended with unusual diligence, anxiety, or delight’). In other words, the interpretations may move and change depending on contexts, situations and even the moment of the utterance. Furthermore, there is the issue of modal strength in any given instance of use. Huddleston (2002:175-179) indicates that there are three dimensions of modality: strength, kind and degree. The ‘strength’ relates to the semantic – pragmatic balance. There are cases in which the semantic aspect dominates most. For example, an expression ‘*Could you do me a favour?*’ clearly marks negative politeness. This is clearly a case in which the pragmatic aspect dominates, rather than the expression of the semantic modality such as ability. Also, ‘*Can you do me a favour?*’ can be regarded as a polite expression, but the degree of the polite consideration of the speaker seems to be less compared to the previous use of *could*. This is also an issue of modal strength. The kind of modality concerns the issue of the balance between epistemic, deontic and dynamic senses. As for the degree of modality, Huddleston describes it as an issue of how much the expression is modalized. The following example is from Huddleston (2002: 179):

(18)

Unmodalized

They know her.

High Degree Modality

They may know her.

Unmodalized

Strange as it seems, I believe you.

Low Degree Modality

Strange as it may seem, I believe you.

(Huddleston 2002: 179)

The point here concerns how the unmodalized expression is modified by modality. As the high – low differentiation shows, there emerge degrees regarding the strength of modality. Since these (strength, kind and degree) issues are all related to the matter of proportion or weight, I treat this kind of things as the matter of weight in

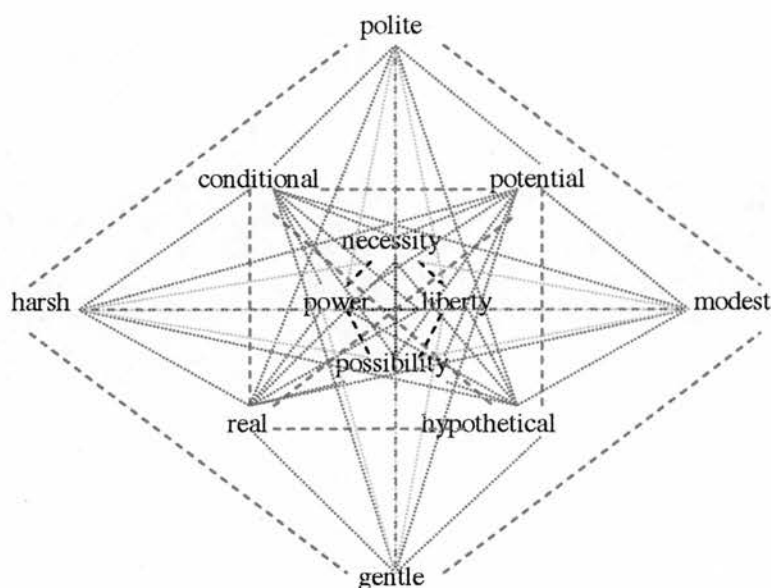
the remainder of this thesis. This weight distinction can also be noticed from the picture of Coates' fuzzy set model (1983). Although it is difficult to find this sort of systematic observation and indication in the grammar books of the LModE period, since there was no concept of 'modality' established at that time, it is possible to point out examples which suggest something very similar, such as the following, from Fell (1784), in one of the explanations of the available uses of *shall*:

- (19) In the first person, *shall* is sometimes used in a sense very nearly approaching to that of the verb *must*, as denoting something which either is not, or which, we fear, is not in our power to prevent:

(Fell 1784: 166)

In this description, "a sense very nearly approaching to that of the verb *must*" indicates that not only is the issue of the modal sense a matter of degree, but also that similar senses are shared by different modal auxiliary verbs. Moreover, the word 'sometimes' implies a dynamic aspect to modal senses, varying across speakers and uses. In this respect, it may be possible to say that this example involves three aspects: network structure, dynamicity and the matter of relative weight.

Previously, in figure 24 above, a picture of a triangular mutual relationship between the semantic, text-pragmatic and social-interactional networks was provided. But it looks rather plain, two dimensional. The image should be changed to show that all the senses involved are more closely gathered to reflect the reality in which there is no border separating the networks. To reflect these points, the following figure is provided as an example.

**Figure 5.25** An expanse of a combined network

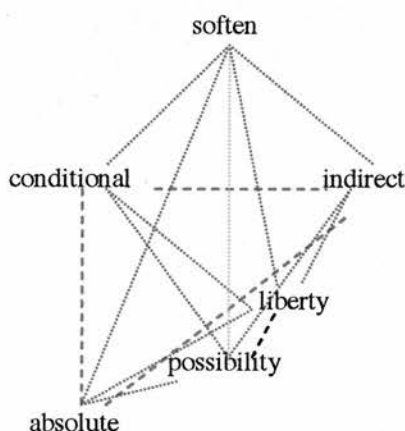
The three networks are overlapped in this picture. The four senses in the semantic category are placed inside. The dotted black lines represent the links which show their internal mutual relations. The four senses of the social-interactional category which are in the periphery extend their internal mutual connections as the dotted blue lines show. There are also four senses which are located in-between the semantic and the social-interactional senses. They are of a textual-pragmatic kind and are connected in their own mutual network. The dotted red lines indicate the internal connections. Then as the historical evolution of the modals suggests, inter-categorical links between the semantic and the textual-pragmatic, and the textual-pragmatic and the social-interactional are established. The thin dotted green lines mark this. Theoretically, it might be estimated that the inter-categorical connections should be linked gradually between the categories whose connections are close to each other (e.g. from the semantic side to the textual-pragmatic, and from the textual-pragmatic to the social-interactional). In this case, there appears a question: is there a link which connects directly between the semantic and the social-interactional? When the triangular relational picture of the mutual connection between all the categories above is considered, it seems to be possible to connect the direct link.

Example (11)' above shows senses in the semantic and the social-interactional domains connected together, but there is no mention of the textual-pragmatic in the same explanation.

However, there is a further thing which is worth considering. The example (5)' above indicates only social-interactional senses. In the explanation I pointed out that it is reasonable to think that there should be 'hidden' senses which underlie the impression of the social-interactional senses. The question here is whether it is possible to connect senses directly between the semantic and the social-interactional domains without the mediation of textual-pragmatic senses, and also whether it is possible to point out only the social-interactional senses without any consideration of any other senses at all. It might be necessary to consider the nature of each of the semantic, the text-pragmatic and the social-interactive senses in this regard. It seems necessary to investigate this issue further (in a separate study). For the moment, I put the direct semantic – social-pragmatic link as provisional by the thin dotted yellow line.

With this model above, I hope that the intricate interaction between the senses can be recognised. When the conditions of the example (6) and (7) are applied to this modelling, the following network appears for the various senses associated with *might*.

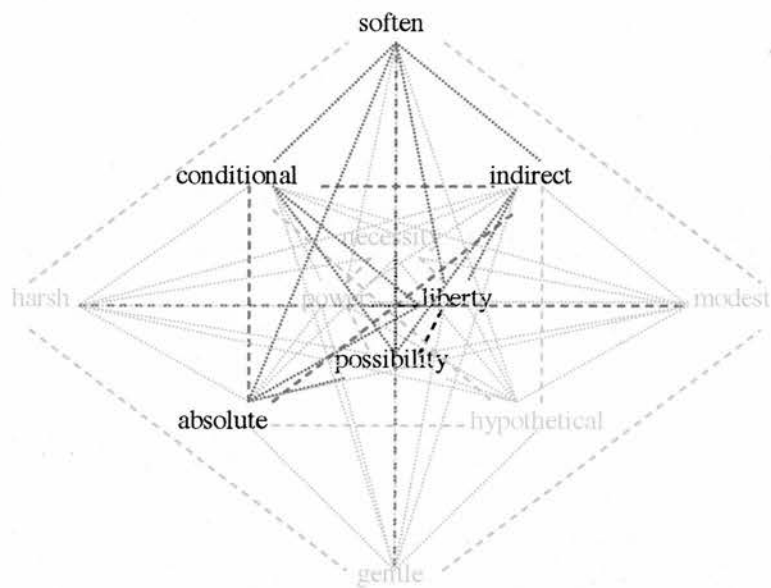
**Figure 5.26** Network of the senses in example (6) and (7)





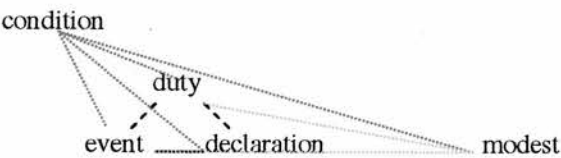
To recognise and clarify that this is merely a single, instantaneous instance of one part of the network of the combinations of the senses, figure 27 may be useful to refer to. The shaded senses and links mark dormant portions of the potential senses. Basically, the senses involved can be as numerous as an individual can recognise. Consequently, the links and the network patterns which connect senses to each other can almost be limitless.

**Figure 5.27 Comparative picture of active – dormant senses and links in a network**



When considering example (16), another valid portion of the network which extends over all the three sub-network categories emerges as the reflection of an application of *should*:

**Figure 5.28 Network of the senses in example (16)**



Therefore, each interpretation can have its own distinct state of the combination and mixture of senses.

However, there are things which this modelling still does not reflect efficiently, regarding the nature of the interpretation of the modal auxiliary verb. Especially, the representations of the aspects of the dynamic network and the matter of weight are rather poor. Such issues might be resolved by a quantitative study of a corpus of 'naturally occurring' Late Modern English data (e.g. letters and diary entries, in informal styles). So far I have simply engaged in trying to create a model which reflects almost only on the existence of the connections between senses. However, now further detailed work with regard to the 'weight' of the connections is possible: this is one of the things which I plan to test and extend in further work, where additional research will develop the model and test its validity.

We have seen that in the descriptions of modal verb meaning and use in the grammar and usage books of the Late Modern period, some senses are indicated as operating simultaneously at any one usage event. As for the conceptualisation of politeness, I have pointed out several pragmatic and semantic senses connected to both modality and politeness. While sometimes the senses which are indicated in the descriptions of both the properties of the modal auxiliary verb and the related senses of politeness overlap, there are also occasions when the modal auxiliary verb is introduced almost directly as a marker of politeness (see Ramsay 1892). It should be clear that there are linkages between the senses, and between the modal auxiliary verb and politeness. The condition of the relations can therefore be explained by adopting the concept of network, which is composed of nodes (factors / elements) and links. Such a representation is theoretically and empirically satisfying, although it has not appeared elsewhere as a theoretical model of modal meaning in the Late Modern period.

With this modelling, the position or standpoint of the modal auxiliary verb in English in terms of its relation to the expression of politeness seems to be slightly more clarified. As far as this present study is concerned, it should be said that the relationship between the linguistic item and politeness is not so closely connected as is the case with honorifics in Japanese. In other words, it may be said that there is

not so much dependence on particular words in English to express politeness or polite sense. This concurs largely with the descriptions of language which can be found in the grammar and manner book in the Late Modern English period. In addition, in the description of the grammar book the modal auxiliary verb was introduced as an item which can indicate certain 'polite-related' senses. Only sometimes was the word 'polite(ness)' adopted directly to the linguistic item.

## 5.6 Summary of chapter 5

This chapter has been concerned with developing a network model to account for the Late Modern English data. In section 5.1, what is described in each section in this chapter was briefly introduced. In section 5.2, three summaries of existing research were provided. One was that the sense of politeness appeared as a result of a fusion of related senses. The identification of the senses, i.e. meanings of the auxiliary verb, is influenced by each use, depending on context. Another was that senses can be derived from not only the single modal auxiliary verb itself, but also from broader units of expression in which the modal term appears, such as phrases and sentences, and even aspects of the larger discourse. The third was that the senses which were more closely connected to politeness had been described more frequently as time went by. This transitional movement coincides with the historical process of grammaticalization. As a result, we can see that the relationship between politeness and English is not always a simple matter of one-to-one form and meaning. This situation encourages us possibly to apply the idea of a network connection to explain the mechanism, and to understand the various conceptualisations which accompany the use of the English modal auxiliary verb. This was verified by confirming that the polite related senses with the modal auxiliary verb, which were pointed out in the descriptions in the grammar and usage books of Late Modern English, could be placed in the nodes of a network system. In section 5.3, theories which have been proposed to understand the mechanism of the relationship between the modal auxiliary verb and its meaning(s) were introduced. Four types of theories were taken

up as examples: monism / monosemy, pluralism / polysemy, eclecticism, and fuzzy-set. As the supporters of each model recognise, each of them had merits and demerits once it was compared to other accounts. In section 5.4, based on the concrete examples which were provided in the description of the grammar book in Late Modern English, the nature of the connections between the modal senses were observed and examined. What could be noticed was that it seemed that the concept of network was highly applicable and useful to describe the situation systematically, reflecting the information from the available data aptly. In section 5.5, a new model was introduced. I set up three provisional categories: semantic, textual-pragmatic and social-interactional to reflect where related senses were located. Each category was composed as a network which potentially connected all the involved senses. Since the descriptions in the grammar book suggested that the senses in different categories are also linked to each other, ultimately there emerged a single synthetic network linking every single element / node. At that moment, there also appeared some issues which have not been resolved by the new model. These included such aspects as dynamicity and weight (the matter of degree) with regard to both the nodes and links. Accordingly, the new model proposed in this thesis is still imperfect and may need to be revised. Nevertheless, I believe that the network model constitutes a contribution to help us better understand the relationship between the modal auxiliary verb and the meaning, especially politeness in English, based on the evidence provided by Late Modern English grammar and usage books.

## Conclusion

Chapter 1 provided the socio-historical background of this study. The Late Modern English period was one in which there was both demand and supply of grammar books of English, and a particular recognition and conceptualisation of politeness: the 'proper' use of language which was provided in descriptions in the text books was regarded by some parts of society as polite and becoming.

Chapter 2 focused on a particular detail of such grammar books which seemed to have flourished during the period of Late Modern English. The book was mainly published as an instructional, prescriptive text for the young and students, which was supposed to be easy to understand and to show what linguistic forms were 'right'. The topic of mood was discussed in such grammars, and the categories of mood were not clear. They were differently categorised depending on authors, although the basic outline was relatively similar. The analysis of the modal auxiliary verb included a discussion of a variety of senses which ranged over semantic and pragmatic domains. This aspect is relevant to our conceptualisation of social and linguistic politeness in the period.

Chapter 3 looked at the two aspects of politeness, namely universal and variable. We could see that manner and usage books provided information which suggested how politeness was conceptualised and recognised by people at that time. The 'face' based theory of politeness by Brown and Levinson (1987) emphasises the universal aspect of politeness. However, it is possible to argue that variable politeness is also part of the theory, even if it is not as emphasised as the universal one. This did not necessarily mean that the variable aspect was not important: indeed, its value is clear from comparative observations of a cross-linguistic, synchronic study, and a diachronic one.

Chapter 4 looked at the relationship between the modal auxiliary verb and marking of politeness in English. When the description of each modal auxiliary verb was analysed, it was possible to recognise that almost all the modal auxiliary verbs were more or less related to senses which represented politeness in Late Modern

English period, and we could see that the recognition of politeness owed much to the effect of mutual interaction in which several related senses were involved. Such understanding of the conceptualisation of politeness suggested that the recognition of politeness depended much on an individual's subjective perspective. The relation between the modal auxiliary verb and politeness was seen to be part of a grammaticalization process, one in which the meaning of a modal auxiliary verb in any given usage event possessed a variety of related senses. This meaning involved connections between the senses, in other words, a network.

Chapter 5 uses the idea of network (Hudson 1995, 1996, 2007) to explain the mechanism of the relationship between the modal auxiliary verb and the related conceptualisation of politeness systematically. Hudson's network theory is mainly concerned with issues of an individual's mental grammar; however, I thought it seemed possible to apply the basic idea of the network - nodes and their connections - to systematise the relationship between the modal auxiliary verb (linguistic form) and the conceptualisation of politeness (meaning, mentality) based on earlier written data. As far as existing theoretical approaches were concerned, it was difficult to deny that there was further room for improvement regarding aspects of the analyses used. Although almost all the approaches were related, the 'fuzzy-set theory' approach taken by Coates (1983) in particular inspired me to apply the idea of a network to the modal-politeness relationship. The new model this thesis introduced was based on data which was collected mainly from a corpus of grammar books in the Late Modern English period. The descriptions were largely prescriptive, defining correlations between form and meaning, associated with the modal auxiliary verb and politeness. It was estimated that to reflect the dynamic aspect of such correlations more efficiently, it would be good in future work to develop a corpus which consisted of real records of the use of modal auxiliary verb in informal discourse. With such additional research, the analysis should be more balanced qualitatively and quantitatively. This means, explanations of relative weights of the links between senses, and the nature of the almost ever-changing network, can be better clarified.



Last, but not least, there is another issue to be discussed. In the introduction to this thesis I presented my initial question: ‘How can I express my polite attitude or intention in English?’ and relate this to the terms of respect in Japanese which are very familiar to me. Let us reconsider this issue here. Reviewing this thesis, we can see that modern English modal auxiliary verbs have a variety of functions in discourse, including a particular use as ‘politeness expressions’. It can be said that such politeness expressions with modal auxiliary verbs are rather peculiar when their uses are compared to those in some other languages. For example, supposing a Japanese customer is asking a Japanese shop clerk for a product which he/she has already ordered. The clerk answers:

“**Kochira** ga **go**chumon no **o**shina de **go**zaimasu.”

An honorific word of ‘this’; an honorific prefix to ‘order’; an honorific prefix to ‘product’; an honorific variant of ‘be’  
 (humility) (courteous & reverence) (courteous) (reverence)

The literal English translation of this expression is “This is the product you have ordered.” But it means something more like ‘here you go’, ‘here it is’. The efficacy of the honorifics here is absolute. Their grammatical and pragmatic characteristics are solidly established; they are universally adopted when certain kinds of politeness are to be expressed. To master the use of such terms of respect is, in a sense, necessary to acquire a particular cultural communicative competence. In other words, on the one hand language very much influences people’s thought, their ways of thinking; on the other society leads people to certain uses and applications of their language and also their ways of thinking, their points of view: language, thought and society are mutually closely connected to each other, influencing and influenced.

In the case of the English speaker, the options of politeness in English are so flexibly varied and relatively un-bounded by particular lexical terms that there are several other aspects of politeness concepts acceptable besides ‘respect’; on the other hand, the terms of respect in Japanese can be noticed everywhere in almost every expression. For Japanese speakers ‘politeness’ can seem almost to equal ‘respect’ exclusively. There are several studies by Japanese authors which have explored politeness expressions in English (e.g. Azuma 1994, Kashino 2002) possibly because of the interest which comes from the cross-linguistic differences. I hope my



historical study into the overt commentary on the emergence of modals as politeness markers in English has contributed further to this debate.

## Appendix 1. Systems of moods proposed (extracted from Michael 1970: 433-434)

### Group I: arranged according to the number of moods

	Moods	Distribution	No. of Grammars
1.	Indicative, Imperative, Infinitive, Optative, Potential, Subjunctive,	1612-1790,	13(full Latin)
2.	Indicative, Imperative, Infinitive, Optative, - Subjunctive,	1586-1797,	3
3.	Indicative, Imperative, - Optative, Potential, Subjunctive,	1624-1774,	3
4.	Indicative, Imperative, Infinitive, - Potential, Subjunctive,	1710-1800,	40
5.	Indicative, Imperative, Infinitive - Potential, -	1619-1796,	30
6.	Indicative, Imperative, - Optative, - Subjunctive,	1774,	1
7.	Indicative, Imperative, Infinitive, - - Subjunctive,	1671-1800,	72
8.	Indicative, Imperative, Infinitive, Optative, - -	1797,	1
9.	Indicative, - Infinitive, Optative, - Subjunctive,	1662,	1
10.	Indicative, Imperative, - - - Subjunctive,	1695-1795,	11
11.	Indicative, Imperative, - - Potential, -	1686-1711,	2
12.	Indicative, Imperative, Infinitive, - - -	1764-1801,	6
13.	Indicative, - - - - -	1712-1790,	2
14.	Indicative, Imperative, - - - - -	1737,	1

### Group II: chronological arrangement

	Moods	Distribution	No. of Grammars
1.	Indicative, Imperative, Infinitive, Subjunctive, Participle,	1732-1800,	8
2.	Indicative, Imperative, Infinitive, Potential, Interrogative, Precative	1751,	1
3.	Indicative, Imperative, Infinitive, Potential, Subjunctive, Elective, Participle, Determinative, Obligative, Compulsive,	1761-1771,	2
4.	Indicative, Imperative, Infinitive, Participle,	1764,	1
5.	Indicative, Infinitive, Participle, Subjunctive,	1765-1788,	2
6.	Indicative, Imperative, Infinitive, Subjunctive, Interrogative, Participle,	1771-1798,	2
7.	Indicative, Imperative, Infinitive, Subjunctive, Interrogative, Precative,	1777,	1
8.	Indicative, Imperative, Infinitive, Subjunctive, Potential, Participle,	1787,	1
Total number of classifications (Group I + 2)			204
Grammars explicitly denying moods in English			19
Grammars silent about moods			35
Total			258

## Appendix 2: categorization of mood

258

	Indicative	Imperative	Subjunctive	Potential	Infinitive	Optative	others	note
Greenwood (1711: 118-9)								no mood in English
Harris (1751)	◦	◦ (in Resistive)	◦ (included in Potential)	◦	◦	◦ = Precative (in Resistive)	Interrogative, Resistive	
Lancelot (1753)	?*	◦	◦	◦		◦		mood; * = the author does not mention the Indicative
Gough (1754)								no mood in English
Bayly (1758: 53)	◦	◦	◦ = Optative		◦	◦ = Subjunctive		
Lowth (1762)	◦	◦	◦		◦		Participle	Primary distinction (Ind. - Imp.); Secondary distinction (Ind. - modalized)
Priestley (1762)	◦	◦	◦ (included in Potential)	◦	◦	◦ (only in Greek)		Basically, no mood in English
Ash (1763)	◦	◦		◦	◦			
Ward (1765)	◦	◦	◦	◦				Potential: may, can, might, could, would, should, must; mood
Fell (1784)	◦	◦	◦ = Potential	◦				Potential is preferable to Subjunctive
Webster (1784)	◦		◦	◦				
Webster (1789)	◦		◦					basically dubious about the existence of moods
Murray, L. (1795: 39)	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦			certain restrictions are added in Potential, different from Subjunctive
	◦ = Absolute (interrogative included)							
Meilan (1803: 64)		◦	◦ = Conditional		◦			mood / mode
Walker (1805: 101)	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦			mood
Angus (1812: 62)	◦	◦		◦	◦			mood
						◦ referring to some other grammarians' opinion	Interrogative, Conditional, Hypothetical / Governed	
Belcher (1815: 3-11)	◦			◦				mood
Davidson (1815: 28)	◦	◦	◦ = Conjunctive	◦	◦			mood / mode
Stucliffe (1815: 51)	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦			mood
Smith (1816: 57)	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦			mode
Andrew (1817: 32)	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦			mood / mode
Jamieson (1818: 34)	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦			mood
Cobbett (1823: 45)	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦			mode
unknown (1823)	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦			
unknown (1823: 304)	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦			mood
Lennie (1827: 20)	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦			mood
Davis (1830)	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦			mood / mode, following Murray's grammar
Cobbett (1833: 50-51)	◦	◦	(◦)					Subjunctive is almost dying out
Cramp (1838: 125)	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦			mood / mode
Latham (1841 1st ed.: 273)								no mood in English
Latham (1841 2nd ed. 478-517)	◦	◦	◦		◦			mood
unknown (1841: 163)	◦?		◦?					no clear description
Connon (1845)	◦	◦	(◦)	(◦)	◦			mood, ( ) = not exactly proper moods
Ballantyne (1847)								no mood in English
Cornwallis (1847: 59)	◦	◦	◦		◦			mode
							Vocative, Precative, Interrogative, Causal, Reflective, etc	
Harrison (1848: 245-7)	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦		mood
Brown (1851: 322)	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦			mood
Maetzner 1874: vol.1: 325; vol.2 107	◦	◦	◦ (as Conjunctive)					mode in vol.1; mood in vol.2; translated by Grace, Clair James
Meiklejohn (1889: 38-9)	◦	◦	(◦)		◦			Subjunctive is almost dying out; mood
Daniel (1893: 67-9)	◦	◦	◦		◦			mood
Earle (1898: 43)	◦	◦	◦		◦	◦ (as one of Subjunctive)		mood
							Conditional (should, would), Permissive (may, might), Compulsive (be to)**; etc. ***	
Sweet (1900: 105)	◦*	◦*	(◦)					Subjunctive is almost dying out; mood; * = as a verb form; ** = as a auxiliary verb form; *** = Inflectional, Auxiliary, and Tense moods with different criteria
Total	36/42	34/42	34/42	23/42	29/42	7/42		
	85.71%	80.95%	80.95%	54.76%	69.05%	16.67%		

### Appendix 3: Labels used for the category 'auxiliary'

Author	name
Greenwood (1711: 119)	Auxiliary / Helping Verb
Harris (1751: 148)	Auxiliary (for those expressing times and modes)
Gough (1754: 47)	Helping Verb
Priestley (1761: 14)	Auxiliary Verb (for those influencing the circumstances of time and action)
Buchanan (1762: 110)	Auxiliary / Helping Verb (to denote time, and mood / manner)
Lowth (1762: 47, 57-8, 62)	Auxiliary, Helper
Ash (1763: 45-52)	Auxiliary Sign (being differentiated from verb)
Fell (1784: 20)	Auxiliary Verb
Webster (1784: 5, 26)	Helping Verb, Auxiliary Sign
Pickbourn (1789: 15-6)	Auxiliary (having both the natures of sign and verb)
Webster (1789: 234)	Auxiliary, Helper (being more differentiated from verb)
Murray (1795: 38)	Auxiliary / Helping Verb
Mailan (1803: 58)	Auxiliary Verb
Walker (1805: 30)	Auxiliary Verb
Murray (1808: 101)	Auxiliary / Helping Verb (as a helper for verb conjugation)
Augus (1812: 76)	Auxiliary Verb
Belcher (1815: 5)	Auxiliary Sign (for the Potential Mood)
Davidson (1815: 30, 32-3)	Auxiliary / Helping Verb (do, be have, will, shall: 30, 40), Sign ('let' for the Imperative, the others for the Potential: 32-3)
Sutcliffe (1815: 55)	Auxiliary Verb ('they greatly augment the power of the verb' (55))
Smith (1816: 57, 60)	Auxiliary Verb (merging with principal verb: 60), Sign (of the Potential; 57)
Andrew (1817: 33-5)	Auxiliary Verb, Sign (more concerned with the semantic aspect)
Jamiesen (1818: 35-6)	Auxiliary ('be' as substantive verb)
Cobbett (1823: 45-64)	Helper, Helping, Auxiliary ('do', 'did', 'be', 'have', 'let', sometimes as principal verbs); with additional meanings besides time, Sign
Lennie (1827: 19, 25, 27-8)	Auxiliary / Helping Verb
Davis (1830: 71)	Auxiliary / Helping Verb
Cramp (1838: 112-)	Auxiliary Verb (no mention of each individual word)
Lathan (1841: 486-95)	Auxiliary Verb
Anon (1841: 103)	Auxiliary Verb
Connon (1845)	no description about auxiliaries
Ballantyne (1847: 9)	Auxiliary Verb
Cornwallis (1847: 61)	Auxiliary
Harrison (1848: 248, 252, 259, 264, 265)	Auxiliary Verb (as the exponents of our moods and tenses)
Brawn (1851: 344)	Auxiliary
Maetzner (1874: vol.2: 130)	Modal Verbs (may, shall, will, let, must, can, dare)
Maetzner (1874: vol.3: 3)	Auxiliary and Modal Verb (will, shall, may, must, can)
Meiklejohn (1889: 53)	Auxiliary Verb
Ramsay (1892: 372)	Auxiliary, Helping Verb
Daniel (1893: 103-8)	Auxiliary Verb
Earle (1898: 46, 50-1)	Auxiliary Verb
Mason (1901: 64, 87-91)	Notional Verb (with its full, proper meanings), Auxiliary Verb (mere marks of modification)
Stephen (1906: xii)	Sign (as Verb)

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